



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

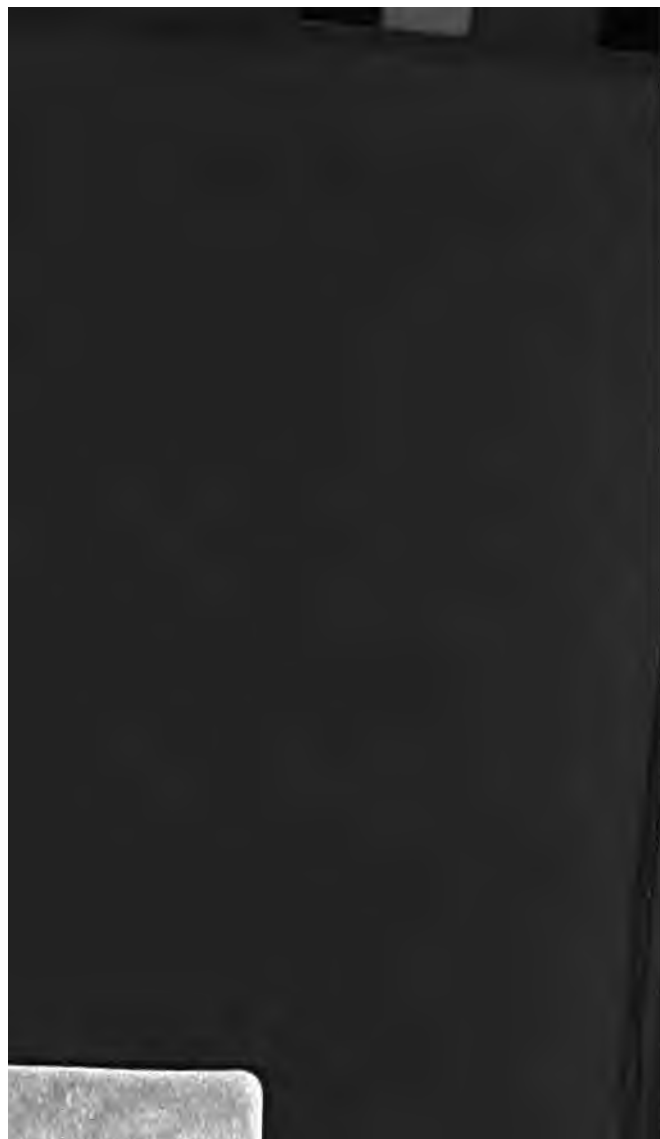
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>











STEPS ACROSS.

STEPS ACROSS;

OR,

Guidance and Help to the Anxious and
Doubtful.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE EVERARD, M.A.,

VICAR OF ST. MARK'S, WOLVERHAMPTON.

AUTHOR OF "DAY BY DAY," "NOT YOUR OWN," ETC.



WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

HOLMES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE;

AND ALDINE CHAMBERS, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1874.

141. m. 168.



Contents.

CHAP.	SUBJECT	PAGE
I.	Steps Across	1
II.	What is Truth?	7
III.	Mistakes about Repentance	24
IV.	From Death to Life	30
V.	The Good Physician and His Patients	60
VI.	How may I know that I am forgiven?	74
VII.	Stones in the Way	90
VIII.	The Stray One recalled	104
IX.	On the necessity and right position of Good Works	123
X.	On Confessing Christ	142
XI.	The Feast of Blessing, and the Grace of the Comforter	160
XII.	On Companions and Books	180
XIII.	Faithful unto Death	199
XIV.	Crossing the River, and Resurrection Glory	215



I. •

Steps Across.

IN the Church of God there are very many who are anxious, doubting, and unsettled in mind. Some there are who have been awakened to serious reflection, and have discovered that there can be no true rest until they are at peace with God, but the secret of its attainment they cannot plainly discern. Others there are who have difficulties on some particular point, and yet from their position they have but few opportunities of finding such help as they need. Perhaps in the town or village where they live there are few religious privileges, and they have no Christian friend of experience enough to direct them aright.

Others there are, again, beset with temptations, moral or intellectual, and are in danger of

being drawn aside from the plain path of faith in Christ. Doubts as to the truth of the Scriptures, or particular parts of them, are very widely spread, and equally so are objections against many of the most necessary doctrines of the Gospel. In addition to this, men are perplexed by the subtleties of Romish teaching, and its errors in manifold shapes are leading very many souls astray from "the faith once delivered to the saints."

For such a variety of cases there can plainly be no general specific, neither can I hope in the very least to meet all the difficulties they present. But I have thought that an attempt might be made to throw some little light on a few of them. Here and there a word might assist a brother walking in darkness, or strengthen one whose feet were almost ready to slip. At least of this I am confident, that the Word of God, the treasury of all wisdom, has a message exactly adapted for the anxious ones of this age, as of the ages gone by, and an effort to bring home its truths to their peculiar necessities can scarcely be in vain.

More than this, I neither desire nor attempt.

If any should seek for speculative reasonings on the origin of evil, on the scheme of atonement, on eternal punishment, or on the Inspiration of God's Word, they must seek for them elsewhere. But if any one should desire to understand the general bearing of Scripture on matters of deepest moment, perhaps he may here find some little help.

After all, let us ever remember that in Christ alone can we find the solution of that which troubles us. In Him are laid up treasures of wisdom; in Him is the answer to every longing of the soul; in Him is the true anointing, to reveal to us that we would know. He whispered in the ear of the disciple who lay on His breast a secret unknown to the rest. And the secret of the Lord is ever with them that fear Him. The wise and prudent know not the things which Christ unfolds to His beloved ones, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

We learn a precious lesson from the Queen of Sheba. She came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and

when she came she proved him with hard questions. She communed with him of all that was in her heart. Nor was it in vain. He told her all her questions, nor was anything hid from the King which he told her not. But a greater than Solomon is here. Christ is still in His Church,—the Counsellor, the Teacher, the Enlightener. He will unfold to His people, as they are able to bear it, the mysteries of His kingdom, and the secrets of His providence. The Spirit of Truth shall guide you into all truth.

Ah, I could tell you of the aged Christian, shut up within his chamber for years, who could marvel at the way in which the Lord revealed to him, one by one, the difficult problems which had long perplexed him in the study of the Word; and how the joy and light increased day by day, as he learnt out more of the ways of God!

Only let there be a thoughtful and intelligent study of the Inspired volume; let there be a careful comparison of one part with another,—of the historical portions in connection with the doctrinal, of the Old Testament with the New,

of the Gospels with the Acts and the Epistles; let there be earnest and expectant prayer for the direct teaching of the Holy Ghost, and a desire to follow the light as far as it is vouchsafed,—and you shall assuredly know all that is essential to your comfort and salvation. “Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will He teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way. What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose.”

Very thankful shall I be if any of the thoughts in this little book should prove to be such as its name implies. “Steps across” are occasionally very useful, though they occupy but a humble position. In the streets of ancient Pompeii there still remain the three stepping-stones placed here and there, by which men crossed over the street when the water was high. And perhaps here some wayfaring man may place his footstep, and be enabled the better to cross some stream of trouble or doubt, or perhaps with more ease and safety to escape the mire of some slough of despond.

Might I suggest to each reader of these pages to make his own the petition of David in the forty-third Psalm: "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles"?

O Word of God Incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky;

We praise Thee for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

The Church from her dear Master
Received the gift Divine,
And still that light she lifteth
O'er all the earth to shine.

It is the golden casket
Where gems of truth are stored:
It is the heaven-drawn picture
Of Christ, the living Word;

It is the chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands,
Still guide, O Christ, to Thee.

Oh, teach Thy wandering pilgrims
By this their path to trace,
Till, clouds and darkness ended,
They see Thee face to face.

II.

What is Truth?

THIS question of Pilate, and the spirit in which he put it to our Lord, seem very much to represent the tone of modern opinion. There is a strange uncertainty abroad as to religious truth. Nothing is true—everything is true,—according as you regard it. Absolutely in itself, truth is nowhere; relatively, truth is everywhere. To the Christian, Christianity is true; to the Hindoo, his sacred books: one thing is true to one man, and one to another; but as to that which is true indeed—sacred, unchangeable, eternal truth,—men seem to disbelieve its existence. And yet in science, history, and all secular matters, men judge not so. They examine and inquire and search diligently as to the foundation of a fact, and then, with toler-

able certainty, they speak of it as true or false.

And why do men act otherwise in religion? What is it but something mistaken for charity, which leads them astray? They will condemn nothing as false, and therefore hold nothing as undoubtedly true. A more fearful quagmire than this I know none. It is the grave of all rest and peace of soul. It leaves men without an inch of solid ground on which to place their foot. Far more hopeful is the condition of a man who believes an idol to be God, than He who believes God and His truth are nowhere to be found.

Closely akin to this spirit is that of those who pick and choose out of Revelation certain parts which they can hold in accordance with their own pre-conceived views, and then reject the rest. They will acknowledge a mighty Creator, but not a just and righteous Lawgiver and Judge; they believe in the possibility of human goodness, but not in the fact of human depravity; they look for eternal felicity, but deny eternal punishment; they regard Christ as a holy Man, but not as the thrice Holy Son of God; they

speak of men being accepted with God, but deny the atonement and mediation by which alone the reconciliation is effected; they would admit that man needs a certain amount of change, but deny the working of the Holy Ghost in raising men to a new life.

The one blot upon this system is that it has no foundation whatever. It rests on nothing but the changing opinions of some particular man or age. I understand the man that finds difficulties in Revelation, and rejects it. I understand the man that is convinced by the overwhelming evidences that it presents, and receives it; but to my mind there is nothing more unreasonable than for a man of his own choice to cut away the largest part of God's truth, and then to imagine that he has any ground for retaining the rest. Surely this cannot be. You must take all or lose all. If the evidence be sufficient to give weight and authority to any, it must necessarily be sufficient to prove the truth of the whole.

The Word of God has many enemies, and has to withstand numberless objections; and it will prove strong enough to outlive them all. I

have read of one casting handfuls of sand against the rock of Gibraltar, and in his wild insanity thinking thus to shake or overthrow it. Not more successful in the end shall be the efforts of those who strive to overthrow our confidence in the Word of God. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

It is not to be denied for a moment that many objections can be raised against the authority and the doctrines of Holy Scripture, which are not easy to meet. Neither can we doubt that many persons who desire to hold by the integrity of God's Word, are troubled by anxious doubts. In answer to such doubts, much help may be found in two volumes of valuable lectures, entitled "Modern Scepticism," and "Faith and Free-thought," published under the direction of the Christian Evidence Society; also in several volumes lately put forth by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and also in "God's Word Written," a very thoughtful book, published by the Religious Tract Society.

Yet after all, the strongest evidence is that

supplied by the Word itself; and those who continue in the study of it from day to day and from year to year, will find ever accumulating proofs of its Divine origin. The plain narrative of the life of Christ appears to me one of those evidences which can never be overthrown. Almost every little detail has such a marvellous depth of heavenly wisdom to be drawn from it, that we see the life of our Lord stretching out to infinity in all directions. It touches every chord, every motive and principle of the human heart, and throws light upon every duty to which we may be called, and upon every temptation to which we may be exposed. It manifests the Divine sympathy for every phase of human sorrow, and the Divine displeasure against the most subtle sins that defile the soul. In single expressions, or even words, we have matter suggested for volumes of critical or practical discussion. We have sayings of our Lord which completely answer errors which did not arise for centuries after the words were spoken. We have invitations and promises which have quelled the doubts and fears of anxious souls, right down the course of eighteen centuries.

Just consider such sayings as the following: "I am the Light of the world;" "Ye are the light of the world;" "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" "One thing is needful;" "Ye must be born again;" "Every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted, but he that exalteth himself shall be abased;" "He that is not with Me is against Me;" "Him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out." Such sayings as these have turned and guided and comforted myriads of souls in all ages, and are a living power to this day, wherever the Word of God is known.

Consider, again, such incidents as our Lord's blessing the little children, or His conversation with the woman at the well of Samaria, or His forbearance when the Samaritan villagers refused to receive Him; or consider such parables as that of the Lost Sheep, of the Prodigal Son, or of the Good Samaritan; and I would ask, is it possible to estimate the power for good which any one of these has exercised over mankind?

Then consider the exquisite combination of graces in our Lord's character. Side by side with the greatest boldness in denouncing pride and hypocrisy, we see the most tender compassion toward the fallen and depraved. We mark His tender sympathy, even unto tears, in the house of mourning; His unflinching courage in the hour of danger; His considerateness even for the lesser wants of others, in contrast with an utter self-forgetfulness and a total disregard for His own necessities. Consider all this as simply told in the pages of the Evangelists, and surely it were easier to believe such a life, attested as it was by works of mercy and grace and power, to be indeed the life of the Son of God on earth, than it were to believe sinful man capable of so great a miracle as inventing the story of a life so far loftier and nobler than his own.

Think, too, of the moral grandeur of Christ's death. There is nothing like it. The narrative is altogether unparalleled in the history of the world. See Christ's tears and prayers and agony in the garden, and His sorrowful complaint of His disciples. See Him led away like a thief,

and yet performing His last miracle to heal the ear of an enemy. See Him standing silent and dumb before His cruel foes, and yet turning a look of compassion on the disciple who denied Him. See Him bearing with utmost patience, unnumbered acts of indignity, and yet in one magnificent confession proclaiming Himself the Son of God, and warning His judge that He, their prisoner, should yet come seated at the right hand of power, and with angels in the clouds of heaven. See Him nailed to the tree, and yet praying for His murderers. See Him at length suffering all shame, pain, darkness of spirit for a season, and yet in His last hours comforting His mother in her sorrow, forgiving and welcoming the dying malefactor, proclaiming the completion of His work, and then committing His soul into the hand of His Father. To my own mind there is a power and a majesty, a marvellous reality in every incident of this scene, that utterly forbids any explanation other than that it is simple truth, the plain statement of the great work which the Son of God accomplished for the salvation of mankind.

The life of the Apostlé Paul presents another

of these evidences, which it is impossible to gainsay. The whole story of his life as a Christian is so bound up with the miraculous vision of Christ on the way to Damascus, that it cannot be separated from it. And that life is one. It is thoroughly in harmony with itself and with the words spoken to Saul by the Saviour. Study it in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, and you find truth written in every line of it. Look at Paul reasoning of righteousness and judgment before Felix, or exhorting Agrippa, with manacled hands, to become altogether such as he was, except his bonds. See him standing on the stairs, exhorting the Jews at Jerusalem, or standing on Mars' Hill, reasoning with the Athenians. See him going forward year after year in the service of Christ, suffering so great a variety of persecutions that we can scarcely understand how he could live through them; and then read in his Epistles why it was and how it was that he bore up through all,—because Christ's grace was sufficient for him, and to him to live was Christ, and to die was gain; and he was well content if only Christ were magnified in His body, by life or by death. Consider all

this, and see what sound judgment and calm reasoning are found side by side with a burning zeal, which for thirty years seem never to have flagged. Hear him at length declare that the time of his departure is at hand, that he has fought the good fight, and finished his course, and now looks forward to a crown of righteousness. Sum it all up, and is there any explanation so natural as to recognise the genuine faith of the Apostle, and the truth of the Word which he proclaimed?

Closely akin to the question, What is truth? comes another,—

What is Christianity?

What is the religion instituted by Christ in its essential elements, so that without them it ceases to be such?

We are told that since there are all sorts of opinions amongst those called Christians, therefore Christianity is only that which is common to them all. Hence it is nothing very definite or distinct. It tells us something about God; it tells us something about the necessity of goodness; it gives something of a system of

morals and duty. But with this we must be content. If a man only keep within these limits, and profess the name of Christ, such a man may justly be called a Christian.

In answer to this, I would say,—*Christianity rests very clearly upon the inspired records of Apostles and Evangelists.* It is not a system evolved from men's own reason or inner consciousness of that which is right and true, but Christians in all ages have taken as their one basis of truth, the Gospels, Epistles, and other portions of Holy Writ. Such was the invariable reference of the early Christians. Their books are filled with quotations from these writings, and though often misapplied, yet they ever regarded them as the final test of truth.

Whosoever does not hold fast by the truth of the Word, cannot rightly be considered a Christian. He may be a conscientious man,—he may be a seeker after truth, and an earnest one,—he may gain our esteem and love for his estimable qualities,—but if not a believer in Revelation, he is not a Christian.

Again, *Christianity is a religion resting on a few great, distinct, well defined facts.* The

Apostle's Creed has been, for example, the accepted formula of faith from age to age. In our own country, amidst all the variety that exists with reference to Church government, to the effect of the Sacraments, and the like, yet all the large communities of Christians—the Church of England, the Wesleyans, the Baptists, the Congregationalists, and many beside,—hold without reservation the truths taught in it. The Incarnation and the Birth of Christ, His Cross, His Resurrection, His Ascension, the mighty working of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost,—all these facts, and many others, are held equally by millions of Christian people who are yet very widely separated by great differences on other points, and are absolutely essential as the very foundation-stones of the Christian faith.

Christianity centres in the glorious Person of Christ. It is not chiefly to be regarded as a system of doctrine, though its teachings on every point, the more they are studied, lead us the more to admire the treasures of wisdom contained in them. But the aim and purpose of every truth is to fix the eye on Christ Him-

self: He is the Alpha and Omega of Christianity. From Him proceeds every ray of light: to Him all hearts are drawn. The Christian finds consolation and strength only in Him. Every motive for Christian living is from Him. The glorious privileges which Christians possess, can only be enjoyed from union and fellowship with Him. Their highest standard of duty is to follow His footsteps, and to walk even as He walked. Christianity, in fact, is Christ. It is Christ in the Bible; Christ in the Manger; Christ on the Cross; Christ, the Risen One; Christ, the Ascended One; Christ, the Prophet, the Priest, the King; Christ in the heart; Christ in the life; Christ in the family; Christ in His Glorious appearing, to be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels.

All our trust, all our love, all our obedience, is due to Him; and the more the eye and the heart is turned fully towards Him, the more true and genuine is the Christianity we possess.

Men have no right to judge Christianity by the lives of inconsistent professors. There is scarcely a large seaport in any part of the world, where

you may not find specimens of unworthy Englishmen, who are a reproach to the name of England. But men scarcely blame *English laws* because they find *a bad Englishman*. Then why should they blame Christianity because they find a bad Christian? Christians must be judged by the teachings of the Gospel, and not the Gospel by the lives of Christians. True is it that Christ is too often wounded in the house of His friends, and that men who call themselves His followers bring great reproach upon His name, and place sad stumbling-blocks in the path of others. Yet for all this, it will prove but a vain excuse for any one that because Judas was a hypocrite, and Peter fell, and few have lived as Christians should, therefore he chose to reject the sweet voice of Redeeming Love.

Neither ought men to be surprised at the manifold corruptions of the pure faith of Christianity. It was the very thing we had reason to expect. The channel of its communication is man, and man himself is fallen and depraved; and whatsoever he touches is liable to suffer in consequence. If the purest water pass through an earthy pipe, it will taste of the taint given

to it. Even so the faith once delivered to the saints holy and undefiled, is too often marred and spoilt by human infirmity in its transmission.

Christianity is a very humbling religion, and human pride rebels against the precepts and doctrines that would uproot it, and thus changes and obscures them.

Christianity is a very simple and accessible religion, bringing salvation very near to the poorest and the most unlearned; and the priestly and ecclesiastical spirit comes in and raises a barrier in the way, that by means of priestly absolution, or the like, man may exercise more authority over his fellow-man.

Christianity is a very holy religion; and the sinful dispositions of men come in, and would make its demands less strict and impartial than God has made them.

Christianity is a very dogmatic religion, laying down truths and doctrines which must not be gainsaid; and the self-conceit of intellect comes in, and imagines that it can improve on God's way, and thus cuts out of the Book that which displeases it, or introduces some new doctrines of its own invention.

Neither ought we to be surprised at the dissensions and strifes too often found amongst those professing the name of Christ. They all come from the same root. They spring not from Christianity itself, but from the fallen nature of man. Many who bear Christ's name have never received His Spirit, or begun to follow His footsteps. And those who love and serve Him have too much of the old Adam yet cleaving to them. Hence arise all the evils in the Church of Christ, and out of it: wars, and oppression, and cruelty, and violence in kingdoms and nations, and strife and bitterness and jealousy amongst such as are called Christians. However much we may lament it, there is nothing to disturb the faith of those who believe that which the Scriptures teach,—that in the present state we must expect to meet with evil on every side, and that only in the fair world of coming glory shall be free from its fearful consequences.

Meanwhile it is the part of each true-hearted Christian to hold fast plain Bible Christianity against all opposers, and to adorn it by a very holy, consistent walk. We need never be afraid of

the ultimate issue. Whatever be its foes, Christianity will triumph in the end. The little stone, cut out without hands, will become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. Christ will bring forth judgment unto victory. He will not fail nor be discouraged until He hath set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law. Only He bids us be workers with Him. He calls on us to fight manfully under His banner; and when the victory is gained, great shall be the honour He will confer on those who have shared the toil of conflict.

III.

A few Mistakes about Repentance.

It is not surprising that men should differ very widely even as to the most necessary doctrines of the Gospel. Whilst the Scripture teaches very plainly, yet the human intellect is easily warped. We take things too much on trust from the lips of others, or look at them through a coloured glass. Perhaps our natural tendencies, perhaps the spirit of pride or self-goodness, perhaps an exclusive view of one favourite doctrine perverts our judgment, and great errors creep in which distort the blessed Gospel of the grace of God.

In nothing has this been the case more than in the matter of repentance. •

What it is, what is its purpose in the scheme of salvation, what is the place which it should

occupy in the life of a Christian,—the lack of a right knowledge of these is a stumbling-block in the path of many inquirers. The consideration of a few of the mistakes frequently made, may therefore be of good service to some who read these pages.

The first mistake I would notice, is the very serious one of *making repentance of too little importance in the preaching of the Word*. There are some preachers of the Gospel who are so anxious to bring sinners to Christ, and have dwelt so *exclusively* on faith in Him, that they have rather hindered than furthered, in so doing, the cause they have at heart. They neglect too much the declaration of God's judgments against sin, of the danger of the broken law, of the fearful character of moral evil wherever it is found, and of the absolute necessity of turning away from it as we draw nigh to God.

Never should we forget the very prominent position which repentance occupies in Holy Scripture. Very repeatedly did Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the whole company of the Prophets, exhort men to repent. When the Baptist came to prepare the way of Christ, repentance was the

key-note of his ministry. The very first message of the Son of man was, "Repent ye!" Twice again does He declare, with repeated emphasis, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And when the great Apostle summed up the teaching he had given at Ephesus, it was all comprehended in two words,—repentance and faith: "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us not be wiser than Christ and His Apostles. If they preached it, so should we. If they believed it needful in awakening the careless, and in humbling the self-righteous, let us be sure that the best way to compass the salvation of souls, is to follow in their footsteps. There is a way of preaching repentance that turns the eye inward, leading men to look to their own feelings for a warrant to come to Christ; and I do not mean this: but there is a way of preaching it that convinces men of their unbelief, and makes them cry out with the multitude at Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what must we do?"

An illustration might be given to show how a right knowledge of the danger of sin must

always precede the reception of the Gospel.

A man of some eminence in his profession, was arranging with a clergyman about the place for his tomb. For some time he had been failing in health and was then on the very brink of the grave. When the place was settled, the clergyman said, "We have been talking about your tomb, but what about your soul? Are you prepared for death?"

"I have no fear about that," he replied. "If I have done some bad things I have done many good ones." But he was reminded that a single sin merited death, and that we have no means of paying the least fraction of the debt we owe to God. It was not long before he saw it in a very different light, and learnt to glory in nothing save the precious blood of Christ.

II. *A shallow, unfelt, inconsiderate acknowledgment of sin in general*, is sometimes put in place of repentance. You often hear persons say, "Of course I repent: I know I am a sinner," without ever having given five minutes real thought to the matter. In answer to this, let it be remembered that true repentance is a

Divine work. We read that "God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life," and Paul urges Timothy to preach in meekness, if perchance "God will give his hearers repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth." The repentance of the Jews at Pentecost was the direct fruit of the coming of the Holy Ghost; and wherever repentance is real and genuine, it has been the touch of the Spirit.

We read of Ephraim acknowledging his stubbornness and impenitence, and urging his petition: "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned;" and then in the following verse we trace the result: "Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after I was instructed I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

This thought seems to cut up by the root the very common idea of many,—that it will be easy to repent by and by. If repentance is a grace of the Divine Spirit as well as a duty, how do you know, brother, that you may have either the desire or the power to repent hereafter, if you refuse to do so now that God calls you to-day? I have noticed in the Iron-works how

quickly men snatch away the bar of iron from the furnace that the hammer may shape it, and the drill bore it, and the knife cut it whilst it is bright red, and before the cold air has power over it. Oh, beware of deadening good impression! The iron will soon get cold: use the favourable moment. If you have any thought of eternity, any feeling of sin, any wish to be a Christian, repent now. Turn to God. Tarry not a moment, lest the opportunity should for ever have fled by.

III. *Repentance is regarded as a Saviour.* It is the work of Satan ever to be raising up barriers between Christ and the soul, and thus, if possible, to hinder the salvation of the sinner. For a long time this barrier may have been a deadly stupor, a death-sleep of indifference; but if by God's grace this is removed, he will strive to raise up some other. Perhaps it is this: he makes the anxious soul fix the eye on its repentance, instead of looking to Jesus. Perhaps you try to work yourself up to a certain measure of sorrow for sin, or of deeper conviction, and then, if you could, you would bring

this in your hand and expect that Christ would grant the pardon that you seek.

But do you not see that this would be saving yourself, just as truly as if you had to do a certain amount of good works before Christ would save you? I am sure this keeps back many from Christ. They imagine they are not welcome because they do not yet feel their need sufficiently, or because their heart is hard, and they have not the feelings that coming sinners ought to have.

I shall not soon forget an old man whom once I met when travelling in the South of England. He had lived amongst those who held very extreme views of election. He felt he could not be far off the grave, and he was not saved; but he had the notion that it was utterly useless for him to turn to Christ until first he had far deeper views of his own sinfulness. He drank in, however, every word I spoke to him of the Saviour, and one passage particularly encouraged him. I told him how great a help I had found in Acts v. 31: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." I told him

how gladly would Christ give to him the repentance he desired, as well as forgiveness; that he had only humbly to go and seek both at His hands, and trust Him at once for a full salvation. So with pencil and paper he dotted down the chapter and verse; and as he left the train, he earnestly asked me to pray for Him.

Dear reader, remember that repentance is not a preliminary work, that you must do before you are welcome to a Saviour's love: it is not a barrier which, in some way, you must leap over, before you can come to the door of the fold. You are not bidden to keep at a distance from Christ, because your repentance is so slight, and your sense of need comparatively small: to do this is to contradict the whole work of Christ, and all the promises of the Gospel. Nothing in us, nothing about us, nothing from us, but misery and sin, can we bring; and when we do bring these, and cast ourselves with them at the feet of Christ, nothing but mercy and grace and love shall we ever receive at His hands.

Christ is exalted to give gifts, "even to the rebellious" (Psalm lxxviii. 18); and if you can only go as a rebel, as a rebel will He receive

you and give you gifts,—the gift of a new heart, the gift of true repentance, the gift of everlasting forgiveness, the gift of eternal life.

I do feel most deeply for the very large number of persons who are kept at arms' length from Christ by something of the fear to which I have alluded. "I can't feel" this or that. Very well: but what then? "You may as well give up in despair," says the cunning Tempter. "Nay: not so," says Christ; "but the sooner come to Me, and trust Me, who am the Fountain of life, and the source of all right feeling and right action."

"I cannot be a Christian," said a young man; "I have no right feelings." "Then go and pray for right feelings," was the answer; and the young man became afterwards the excellent Bishop Wilson of Calcutta.

But I would rather say to any who are anxious to be saved, and yet are beset with this temptation, Don't look at your feelings, but look at Christ. Study Him: His love, His holy example, His free promises; and trust Him fully: then, without your thinking about them, all right feelings will come in due season.

One verse of a precious hymn brought to a lady unspeakable consolation during a long and trying illness. It was this:—

“ Regard not feelings, good or bad ;
Trust only what He saith,—
Looking away from all to Him :
This is to live by faith.”

The root of very much difficulty is a false view of what repentance really is. The word in the original Greek signifies *an after-thought*: i.e., a change of thought and mind. I meet a man by the wayside: I find he has mistaken the road he wishes to go: I tell him his mistake; and he perceives it, and turns round and walks in the very opposite direction.

This is very like repentance. A man sees the path in which he has been walking will end in death: the Spirit of God awakens Him to see that sin will bring sorrow and shame and misery, and that God's favour and love alone can bring true peace. So he turns round: he forsakes the evil and chooses the good; he acknowledges his former misdoings; he casts off his old master, the devil; he renounces the

world and its lusts; he takes a low place; he turns away from sin, from pride, from idols, from the world,—to God, the Fountain of true and lasting joy. “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.” “Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God.”

Such is repentance,—the repentance that is unto life. In some instances the growth may be gradual; in others it may be the work of a moment. A young man goes from home, and meets with a cousin whom he has not seen for some time. He sees a great change in him; and as they go to rest, the cousin tells him of the blessing and comfort he has found in the Saviour; and this becomes the turning-point of life to the young man: that night he determines that he will also cast in his lot with the people of God. The next day, being Sunday, he openly confesses his desire; and on the following Thursday he is able to rejoice in Christ.

Never imagine, then, that repentance is a barrier between any anxious soul and Christ. It is the heart returning to the Father from all its wanderings. He who forsakes sin and re-

turns to the Lord, has already, however imperfect it may be, the grace of true repentance.

IV. *We must not separate repentance and faith.* True repentance and saving faith go hand in hand. They are indissolubly linked together; they are twin sisters, fellow-helpers one of the other.

Repentance saith, "I will turn from all iniquity."

Faith replies, "In Jesus only is thy help."

Repentance saith, "I will arise and go to my Father."

Faith replies, "Christ is the way: Christ is the door. By the blood of sprinkling alone canst thou approach."

Again: faith saith, "Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me."

Repentance adds, "Let it grieve thee that thy sins have nailed Him to the tree."

Faith saith, "I rejoice in Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Repentance adds, "How unworthy art thou of love so marvellous!"

Thus faith assists repentance, and repentance

perfects faith, and both go hand in hand toward the heavenly city. Without repentance faith would never care to avail itself of a Saviour's grace and mercy; without faith repentance would neither have strength nor courage to forsake sin and draw near to God. Faith rejoices in the abounding fulness of a Saviour's grace: repentance is humbled, and trembles at the sight of constant sin and unworthiness. So the believer is happy, and yet humble, and obeys the command given in the second Psalm: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

V. There is one other mistake to which I would refer. *Repentance is a painful duty to be left behind as men advance in the Christian life.* Some would teach that Christians have no more to do with repentance and forgiveness and confession when once they are in Christ. I do not find this to be the teaching of Holy Scripture. True, for believers there is no condemnation: they are fully accepted and justified in the beloved; but equally true is it that they have daily need to condemn themselves and

humble themselves greatly before God. As they come out the more into God's light, the more they see clearly the innumerable spots and blemishes and infirmities which cleave to them. Too often are there falls and outbreaks of the old nature, which ought to bring the deepest humiliation. Besides, the deeper our humiliation, the more we prize Christ's salvation,—and it is equally true, as in the days of David, that “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart will He not despise.” The repentance of the sinner is indeed to be distinguished from that of the forgiven, accepted child of God: in the one case, it is the returning from the far country; in the other, it is the humble confession of the child living in the Father's house, that he still feels he leaves undone the things he ought to have done, and that he does the things he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him. Nowhere have we language of deeper self-abasement than in the confession in our Communion Service, but it is manifestly a service for those walking in fellowship with God. From the beginning, to the end of their course, may Christians learn the

true spirit Christ would have them cherish, from
His own words (Matt. v.) :—

“Blessed are the poor in spirit : for their’s
the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are they that mourn : for they sha
be comforted.”

Weary of earth and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven and long to enter in :
But there no evil thing may find a home ;
And yet I hear a voice that bids me “Come.”

So vile am I, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land ?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear ?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

The while I fain would tread the heavenly way,
Evil is ever with me day by day ;
Yet on mine ears the gracious tidings fall,—
“Repent, confess : thou shalt be loosed from all.”

It is the voice of Jesus that I hear :
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near ;
And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.

O great Absolver ! grant my soul may wear
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer,
That in the Father’s courts my glorious dress
May be the garment of Thy righteousness.

IV.

From Death to Life.

A GREAT lesson may be gathered from the process of budding roses. A wild briar is taken, and then a small germ is introduced from a good rose bush; and, if it takes, the tree becomes changed, and that which would otherwise have been worthless, is a tree well worthy of a place in the garden of a King.

It is thus with the Word of God engrafted in the heart. Man is but as the thorn or the briar; but Divine grace, making use of the Word, effects a great change. Man becomes a new creature: he is fitted for a place in God's kingdom; he adorns the garden of Christ's Church.

Such a germ of Divine truth as may be instrumental in the conversion of a soul, is found

in one of the solemn affirmations of the Son of man: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

What a wonderful change is that which is here spoken of! This world often witnesses great changes. Tracks of land, once with scarcely a solitary inhabitant, become vast and populous cities; islands once standing in the lowest rank of civilization rise to a very high position; families are lifted up from comparative poverty to enjoy a large share of wealth and comfort. But this is the greatest change by far. It is the transformation of the sinner into the saint—of one who has been a child of wrath into a beloved member of the household of grace.

But what is this change? How may it be obtained? To know something of this will be very helpful to the anxious inquirer.

Contrast, first of all, the death and the life of which Christ speaks, and then consider the passage between the two.

The death here spoken of by Christ is very comprehensive of evil. To exhaust its meaning would be impossible, but it may be explained in some measure by other parallel expressions in this Gospel.

Compare the expression in chap. iii. 18: "He that believeth not is condemned already:" *i.e.*, he is dead in the eye of the law. In a very real sense the present is a judgment day. A man's sins are now laid bare before the Great Judge, and therefore in His sight he who is under the law stands guilty and condemned.

This very hour, dear reader, if you are yet without Christ, you stand accused, convicted, condemned of innumerable breaches of God's law, and therefore, death, eternal death and condemnation, are written against your name.

Another expression (chap. iii. 36), gives the same thought in a different form: "He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him." Till you are in Christ, a dark cloud ever rests over you: it is charged with the hot thunderbolts of God's sorest judgments, and may any moment break, not in blessings, but in fearful curses over your head. Wherever you

be, whatever be your work or employment, God is angry! You may be in the haunts of business and commerce, working hard with brain or hand to increase your store: but God is angry! You may be in the circle of pleasant society, listening to sweet music, enchanting others by the melody of your voice, or interesting them by your powers of conversation: but God is angry! You may be in the temple of His grace, with the full congregation, on your bended knees, or chanting, "God be merciful unto us and bless us;" or singing:—

"God is love, His mercy brightens
All the path in which we move :"

and yet all the while, God is angry; for your heart is not there, and you are yet in your sins!

Still, still, that dark, terrible thunder-cloud of the just, holy anger of an offended God abideth over you! Ah, I wonder that men can eat or drink or sleep or enjoy a single pleasure whilst sin is unforgiven and God is still angry! If they believed it they could not.

If a cloud were growing blacker and blacker,

and you knew that it would soon break, and the lightning's flash would soon be seen, and the rolling thunder, and the pelting rain would soon be heard and felt far and wide, should you remain contentedly in the open plain, or should you not seek a shelter ere the storm came ?

Or if a river of burning lava from a neighbouring volcano were rapidly approaching your dwelling, could you possibly rest until you had fled to a place of safety ?

But is it not even so ? Till you are saved in Christ the danger increases moment by moment. Fresh sin is committed, and the guilt increases ; life is growing shorter, and God's patience and forbearance will soon be exhausted ; and very soon will those who abide in sin and unbelief know the reality and terribleness of God's judgments upon those who have rejected His mercy. Oh, how wise it is to flee at once to His mercy, whose wrath you cannot escape ! Such is one aspect of spiritual death : it is a state of present wrath and condemnation.

But there is more than this : there is apathy, torpor, blindness ; there is a fatal indifference which hides from a man's view his own terrible

world and its lusts; he takes a low place; he turns away from sin, from pride, from idols, from the world,—to God, the Fountain of true and lasting joy. “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.” “Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God.”

Such is repentance,—the repentance that is unto life. In some instances the growth may be gradual; in others it may be the work of a moment. A young man goes from home, and meets with a cousin whom he has not seen for some time. He sees a great change in him; and as they go to rest, the cousin tells him of the blessing and comfort he has found in the Saviour; and this becomes the turning-point of life to the young man: that night he determines that he will also cast in his lot with the people of God. The next day, being Sunday, he openly confesses his desire; and on the following Thursday he is able to rejoice in Christ.

Never imagine, then, that repentance is a barrier between any anxious soul and Christ. It is the heart returning to the Father from all its wanderings. He who forsakes sin and re-

turns to the Lord, has already, however imperfect it may be, the grace of true repentance.

IV. *We must not separate repentance and faith.* True repentance and saving faith go hand in hand. They are indissolubly linked together; they are twin sisters, fellow-helpers one of the other.

Repentance saith, "I will turn from all iniquity."

Faith replies, "In Jesus only is thy help."

Repentance saith, "I will arise and go to my Father."

Faith replies, "Christ is the way: Christ is the door. By the blood of sprinkling alone canst thou approach."

Again: faith saith, "Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me."

Repentance adds, "Let it grieve thee that thy sins have nailed Him to the tree."

Faith saith, "I rejoice in Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Repentance adds, "How unworthy art thou of love so marvellous!"

Thus faith assists repentance, and repentance

perfects faith, and both go hand in hand toward the heavenly city. Without repentance faith would never care to avail itself of a Saviour's grace and mercy; without faith repentance would neither have strength nor courage to forsake sin and draw near to God. Faith rejoices in the abounding fulness of a Saviour's grace: repentance is humbled, and trembles at the sight of constant sin and unworthiness. So the believer is happy, and yet humble, and obeys the command given in the second Psalm: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

V. There is one other mistake to which I would refer. *Repentance is a painful duty to be left behind as men advance in the Christian life.* Some would teach that Christians have no more to do with repentance and forgiveness and confession when once they are in Christ. I do not find this to be the teaching of Holy Scripture. True, for believers there is no condemnation: they are fully accepted and justified in the beloved; but equally true is it that they have daily need to condemn themselves and

humble themselves greatly before God. As they come out the more into God's light, the more they see clearly the innumerable spots and blemishes and infirmities which cleave to them. Too often are there falls and outbreaks of the old nature, which ought to bring the deepest humiliation. Besides, the deeper our humiliation, the more we prize Christ's salvation,—and it is equally true, as in the days of David, that “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart will He not despise.” The repentance of the sinner is indeed to be distinguished from that of the forgiven, accepted child of God: in the one case, it is the returning from the far country; in the other, it is the humble confession of the child living in the Father's house, that he still feels he leaves undone the things he ought to have done, and that he does the things he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him. Nowhere have we language of deeper self-abasement than in the confession in our Communion Service, but it is manifestly a service for those walking in fellowship with God. From the beginning, to the end of their course, may Christians learn the

true spirit Christ would have them cherish, from His own words (Matt. v.) :—

“Blessed are the poor in spirit : for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.”

Weary of earth and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven and long to enter in :
But there no evil thing may find a home ;
And yet I hear a voice that bids me “Come.”

So vile am I, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land ?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear ?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

The while I fain would tread the heavenly way,
Evil is ever with me day by day ;
Yet on mine ears the gracious tidings fall,—
“Repent, confess : thou shalt be loosed from all.”

It is the voice of Jesus that I hear :
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near ;
And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.

O great Absolver ! grant my soul may wear
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer,
That in the Father’s courts my glorious dress
May be the garment of Thy righteousness.

so often fell from His lips, or from the lips of the Apostles whom He sent. Receive those lessons of heavenly wisdom which teach us of ourselves, and our duties, and of our Father in heaven. Receive with joyful confidence those gracious invitations and promises which He hath left to strengthen and cheer us. And whilst we receive His word, we must receive Him as our only hope and Saviour. We must trust in His salvation and believe in His Name.

I remember, well, one who thus heard the Word and received Christ. He was a rough country lad, and very deaf; but He loved to hear the message of God's love. When in the Sunday-school he would sit on the first form, and with his hand raised to his ear, that he might the better catch each word, would listen most attentively to the preached Gospel. And he believed in Christ, and showed forth the fruits of a new life "I learnt a lesson in your Sunday-school," he said: "*namely, that I need a Saviour; and I have a Saviour, and will make Him my road to heaven.*" And he lived for Christ as well as believed in Him. He was very poor, but out of his deep poverty he loved

in one of the solemn affirmations of the Son of man: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

What a wonderful change is that which is here spoken of! This world often witnesses great changes. Tracks of land, once with scarcely a solitary inhabitant, become vast and populous cities; islands once standing in the lowest rank of civilization rise to a very high position; families are lifted up from comparative poverty to enjoy a large share of wealth and comfort. But this is the greatest change by far. It is the transformation of the sinner into the saint—of one who has been a child of wrath into a beloved member of the household of grace.

But what is this change? How may it be obtained? To know something of this will be very helpful to the anxious inquirer.

Contrast, first of all, the death and the life of which Christ speaks, and then consider the passage between the two.

cleanse, to guard. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

Then we may take it in somewhat of an opposite aspect to this. We may look at it as the receiving of a gift at the hand of a gracious and bountiful Friend. Salvation is "the gift of God." "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is a delightful thought for those who have learnt their own spiritual poverty, to remember that Christ, by His merit and death, has earned and purchased and paid the full price for our complete salvation, and now offers it *as a present*, as a boon of love, without money and without price; and the most sinful and the most unworthy have but to stretch out an empty hand and accept it, and it is their own. With no qualification on thy side, brother, but misery and sin, ask of Him His great gift, and trust Him to bestow it, and richly and abundantly will He fulfil all thy desire.

Take a third aspect of faith. It is especially important as put forth very clearly by Christ

Himself. Christ is the antitype of the brazen serpent. The wounded Israelite, bitten by the fiery serpent, was unable to provide any remedy, or to escape the death which ensued ; but the piece of brass, fashioned into a serpent, was lifted up, and then looking up to it, he lived. It was God's remedy, and never failed those who employed it. The sinner likewise is perishing, hopeless, despairing. He cannot save himself : "The soul that sinneth it shall die ;" but Christ is lifted up : once crucified for our sins, He is now exalted to be our Mediator at the right hand of God ; and the sinner has but to look. Faith is the heart-look : it is lifting up the eye to Him for pardon and life ; and he who looks will live. Joy and peace and hope will arise in his heart, and he will find salvation and health in Christ.

Take a fourth aspect of faith. It naturally flows out of another illustration used by Christ. He compares Himself to the hen gathering her brood under her wings. So compassionately, so tenderly would He have welcomed and shielded the children of Jerusalem : "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,.....how often would I have gathered thy

children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." But what does this imply as to the means by which the sinner may find shelter in Christ? Is it not simply this,—that we must betake ourselves to Him, and run to Him as the young chickens run to the wing of the mother bird? Such is faith. It is no hard and difficult thing for the young ones to run beneath the wing when the cold wind and pelting rain is beating upon them; neither have sinners any great and hard thing to do in coming to Christ. Christ has done all that was hard and painful in His meritorious cross and passion, and now He bids us only in heart flee to Him and enjoy the benefits of His mediation, and beneath His wing we are secure from all harm.

In all these various aspects of faith there is much akin, though in appearance they seem to differ. In each case self is humbled and Christ is exalted.

In the first view,—the depositing of a treasure,—we acknowledge our inability to keep ourselves, and we rely upon Christ's faithfulness and power to help us.

In the second view,—the acceptance of a gift,—we own our poverty and necessity, and the kindness, bounty, and all-sufficiency of Christ.

In the third view,—the heart-look at Christ,—we manifest our sense of our lost condition through sin, and of its terrible consequences, and that in Christ's death alone there is virtue to heal and save.

In the fourth view,—a fleeing to Christ's wing,—we confess our exposure to peril and our inability to avert it, and that in Christ there is a shelter and a hiding-place.

Here, then, is the passage between death and life. Wherever there is this faith wrought within the heart by the Holy Ghost, there is life. It may be but a feeble and trembling faith: it may be but a spark mingled with much unbelief; but if it be real, if it leads the soul to roll itself on Christ, to take from Him the gift of salvation, to run to Him in all its realized helplessness, then shall it never be disappointed.

Dear reader, what saith your own heart to Him who has been offering to you so freely the unspeakable benefit of His salvation? You see

how vast is the difference between him who believeth, and him who believeth not; you see how nigh Christ brings to you His saving grace, and how ready is the help you need. Will you accept it? Will you humbly draw nigh, and thankfully embrace the hope of everlasting life? Is it not wise to do so whilst you may.

“To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow!” whispers your adversary. “Better wait till you have a more convenient season! Better wait till the world has less attraction! Better wait till prayer becomes easier!” Alas, he hides from men the truth that the downward path becomes more fatally easy for each day’s delay,—that the chains of evil are more firmly riveted, that the powers of the world to come fade more and more into distant dreamland, that conscience, once sensitive, becomes deadened, and that temptations and dangers and difficulties increase instead of diminishing, to those who put off their return to God.

“To-day, to-day, to-day!” is God’s message. “Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of salvation!” Whilst you read these

lines Christ is calling you to faith in Him. The door is open: why not enter? The way is set plainly before you: why not at once put your foot on it? The bridge is nigh by which you may cross at once from the shore of death to that of life: why not cross to-day? Why not lift up the heart in an earnest, believing petition,—"Lord Jesus, save me: I perish"? Why not turn into prayer His own promise, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out," and say to Him, "Lord, I come! Fulfil to me Thine own plighted word! Cast me not away from Thy presence! Welcome me to Thyself, and make me Thine for ever"?

Be sure that *the bridge will very soon be broken down!* There will be no crossing over by and by: there is no salvation in the grave. There are many who deny the eternity of future punishment; but one single passage of Holy writ is enough to shatter to the winds every doubt. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." There can be no change of character,

and therefore no change of condition. Your wisdom is to ensure life now, by faith in Christ. His word of promise is true and faithful, and will never disappoint you: therefore lay hold of it. Wait not a week, a day, an hour, a moment, lest a message from the Judge should come—this night, this hour, thy soul is required of thee!

A few words to those who are Christ's.

One very plain mark of this life is given by the Apostle John in his first Epistle iii. 14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Dear reader, is there in your heart, as a ruling principle, love to Christ and to His people? Is there a something within that overcomes pride and selfishness and worldliness, and draws you by a sweet and powerful attraction towards those you believe to be genuine Christians? Is there a strong brotherly feeling that rises up in your heart, and binds you to every one in whom is the mark of discipleship? Have you a real sympathy with God's children? Do you prefer their society to that of others? If you do, take courage. It is a good sign: it

is a mark of God's grace; it is the fruit of His Spirit.

Let it abound more and more. You say, "I believe in the communion of Saints:" that is, you believe that among God's people there is a holy fellowship and sympathy,—a bond of union that very much bridges over differences of rank, position, education, and many other things,—a kinship of brotherhood, because all are brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus. And if so, why not manifest it more? In this cold world why should Christians be so stiff and formal and unsympathetic, as too often they are, because some little external matters separate them? Strive then to overcome this. Be more like the early Christians: be eager to help a fellow-Christian in trouble. Speak in kind words, as a brother or a sister, to a Christian in a lower position of life than yourself. I do not mean that differences of position are to cease, or that there ought to be undue familiarity on the part of those whom God's providence has appointed a lower station in society towards those in a higher, but I mean that the great tie of spiritual kinship ought to be recognised wherever it exists, and

give a tone to all intercourse between those who possess it.

“The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another...to the end that He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”

“In no wise cast thee out.” The words are spoken ;
And never, never can Thy word be broken :
Here then I lay me down, and take my rest
Calm as an infant on its mother's breast.

“In no wise cast thee out.” Oh, words of power
To shed a light upon the darkest hour !
To meet each want I can on them rely,
And on their truth rest my eternity.

“In no wise cast thee out.” Steadfast and sure
This anchor of the soul shall still endure :
Through life, through death, when heart and flesh shall fail,
Till it has brought me safe within the vail.

“In no wise cast thee out.” I need not care
To seek in this dark heart what is not there :
Alike from good or ill in self, I flee
To find my righteousness, my ALL, in THEE.

“In no wise cast thee out.” I live, I die,
And fearless pass into eternity ;
Resting on this alone,—THY WORD IS GIVEN :
That word secures *Pardon, Salvation, Heaven.*

V.

The Good Physician and His Patients.

No sooner did Matthew, the Publican, forsake all and follow Christ, than he assembled together old friends and companions, and invited Christ to come and sit down in the midst of them. Nor was Christ unwilling: it was exactly the work in which He delighted. Where, above all places, should a physician be found but in the hospital? And where should *He* be found who came to heal men's souls, but where such were met who most needed His help? Of course, the Pharisees misunderstand and object: "Why do ye, why does your Master, sit down with Publicans and sinners?" "Because they most need my help and salvation, and because for such I came into the world," was the spirit of our Lord's reply. "They that are whole have

no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." I know nothing that has oftener been a thought of help to me than this office of Christ to be the Physician of His people. It may likewise prove a message of consolation to some who read these pages: it may be a "step across" some stream of fear or unbelief; and may give you a fresh view of the rich fulness of grace and blessing in Christ.

It is impossible to over-estimate the fearful character of that malady of sin and depravity which Christ comes to heal. It prevails everywhere. It is found in all kingdoms,—in all races,—in all cities, towns, and villages; it has its victims in every home; it has touched every heart; it brings with it unrest and disquietude; it destroys peace in the heart and peace in the home. It is, moreover, highly infectious: its atmosphere is injurious to those around; and it is incurable by all human art or power. The ministers of Christ can reprove sin, and show its awful consequences; but they cannot, by their own efforts, turn one sinner from his way. Parents and teachers can warn the young;

but too often all warnings are in vain. The sinner may resolve, and resolve again, to forsake old habits ; but the habit of evil proves stronger than his resolution.

But that which cannot be effected by man's power can be done by the Saviour's grace. He is the great Healer. "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Since Christ has been revealed, let none doubt that in Him will be found all that meets the sinner's need.

Christ is a Physician, *ever near at hand*. In very many cases distance prevents help being obtained in time to save life. In country villages there are often sudden cases of sickness or accident, and no medical help can be obtained nearer than five, or even eight or ten miles ; and so an hour or two elapses, and it is too late. On the field of battle, too, how many a soldier has lost his life on this account ! The wound might be bound up, and the hemorrhage stayed, if only the surgeon were at hand ; but in his absence death ensues. But Christ is close at hand to hear the feeblest cry of distress, and to succour the wounded and perishing one. Yea : wheresoever thou mayest be,—here at home, or far away on

the deep ocean,—sorely pained by the fiery darts of the Tempter, or suffering from some wilful transgression,—yet but lift thine eye in humble faith, and thou wilt see Christ by thy side, in all tender compassion and love ready to bind up the broken heart, to forgive the grievous fall, or to restore to you the peace and comfort for which you long. “The Lord is nigh to them that call upon Him, to all them that call upon Him faithfully. The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken spirit, and saveth such as be of a contrite heart.”

Christ is willing to *undertake every case without fee or reward*. When Christ was on earth, we remember how the woman who had spent her all on many physicians, and had suffered many things and was nothing bettered but rather grew worse, at length came to seek His aid: and she obtained it at once. She had to bring nothing to this Physician; but she touched Him, and at once she was healed of her plague.

And still Jesus heals freely: He asks nothing from us as the price of His ready help. Shall I bring a solitary half-crown? Shall I bring a few good works, a few good prayers or feelings,

and then expect Christ will reward me by granting forgiveness and grace? Not so. Come as thou art! Nay: if thou art too helpless, too paralysed by sin's power to move a step, as thou art too poor to offer anything,—still, a look, a longing, a breathing after Him, a sigh, will not be lost.

See the man lying on the way to Jericho. The thieves had robbed him of all he possessed; they had sorely wounded him, leaving him half dead: he lay helpless in his blood. But the good Samaritan passed by: he saw him; he had compassion; he undertook his case. What could the man do, but thankfully receive the kindness that the Samaritan did for him? He had no money, no strength, no power to move. But the good Samaritan did all. He gave the healing remedies, and applied them; he carried him along on his own beast; he watched over him during his recovery; he provided for his future necessities. Even thus is it with the sinner and Christ. We can do nothing; our Physician can do everything. He finds us robbed of everything by the great Highwayman, and unable to save ourselves. But He does all

freely. He takes us as He finds us, and does all that is needful ; He heals, nourishes, and cherishes ; He is Physician, Nurse, Provider, Bearer, all in one. He expects nothing from us, but that which He first bestows : He leaves not, neither forsakes, such as commit themselves to His care.

In Christ is *the most perfect skill to discern the peculiar features of each case*. In visiting a Convalescent Hospital, in the north of England, I was much struck with the frequent complaint, "Oh, sir, the doctor here does not understand my complaint !" And so many of the patients returned home without any real benefit, because they were strangers to those who had the charge of them, and who therefore could not fully enter into their case. But Christ knows what is in man : He looks right deep into the heart, and in a moment can tell the full extent of the evil. You may feel there is something peculiar in your sin or temptation,—something entirely different from that of others ; and this very much discourages you. But Christ knows the peculiarity, if it be so, and He knows how to meet it.

Or it may be that there is *a complication* of

evil. Sometimes, in a case of disease, a complication of various disorders occurs, and tries exceedingly the skill of the Physician. The medicine or remedy given to meet one disorder may aggravate and increase another. With yourself there may be evil of various kinds. There may be the remembrance of former guilt; a frequent aversion to prayer; a coldness and indifference of heart, that you cannot cast off; and perhaps you are ready to despair. But Christ sees the working of all this sin and corruption and hardness of heart, and He can counteract it all by His all-sufficient grace. Before you have spoken a word, when you kneel down and cast yourself upon His mercy, He is prepared to forgive and save. You need not unfold in the Confessional to an earthly priest the secret workings of a sinful heart, since Christ knows beforehand all that you are, and cannot fail to succour the tempted soul.

In Christ there is also a Divine power not only to discern, but *completely to effect a cure in every case of spiritual disease*. How often do men find that the very ablest physicians in the kingdom have no means of doing anything effectually for

them. Perhaps you have gone up to London, and have had great expense, and made great efforts to consult some eminent man ; and when you have told him everything, and he has carefully examined all the symptoms of your disease, you see a look that tells its own tale ; and you find out that all is in vain, and that it is beyond all human art to save your life.

But this thought manifests by contrast the power of Christ. When He was upon earth none were sent unhealed away. The blind and the lame, the deaf and the dumb, the palsied and the lepers, those possessed with devils and those laid low with fever,—all alike were healed immediately by the touch of the Son of man. “The whole multitude sought to touch Him ; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all.”

It was a lesson for all time. Thus completely and surely does Jesus restore all who come to Him. He can open the eyes long closed in the night of ignorance, and strengthen those who have yet had no power to walk in God’s ways ; He can unstop the ear long deaf to the sweet voice of the Gospel, and teach the prayerless lips to

plead with God ; He can remove the paralysis of a careless indifference, and cleanse souls from the leprosy of debasing lusts ; He can cast out the evil spirits of envy, and hatred, and murmuring, and unbelief, and can save men from the fever of covetousness and every unruly temper.

His power, when on earth, reached to the *very worst* cases of disease. The man full of leprosy, and the woman whom other physicians had tried in vain to benefit, both came, and others just as hopeless, and were alike healed. Yea : and I see Jesus day by day saving such as man might reckon beyond the reach of His saving arm.

I have known a man who once, far and wide, was regarded as one of the vilest : a drunkard, a prize-fighter, and much beside. He comes into a school-room on one occasion, and a message was spoken from the Word of God : " When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." Such was the word that was spoken : and this man obeyed it. He turned from sin to the merciful Saviour : he became a new creature ;

old things passed away, and all things became new. He lived fifteen years a monument of the power and grace of Christ; and now lies in our Wolverhampton Cemetery: and on his tombstone, by his own request, are inscribed the words which led to his conversion.

Nor does any length of time prevent the possibility of Christ saving the sinner. We read of the woman healed after twelve years of suffering; another woman bowed down by her infirmity for eighteen years; the man at the pool had been lying there eight-and-thirty years; and the man whose eyes were opened by Christ had been blind from his birth.

Thus no lapse of years can hinder the soul, who seeks a Saviour, finding help from Him. True it is, that if you now turn from Him, and refuse His grace, it becomes each year, each day, more unlikely you will ever care to seek Him; for the windows of the soul become darkened more and more by wilful unbelief; but if now you have the desire to flee straight to Him, He will in nowise reject you, because for many a day you have turned your back upon Him.

Three short but precious words I noticed on the

memorial stone of Hetty Bowman, whose writings have been so useful to many; and I learnt that they were the last words that ever fell from her lips. "Mighty to save!"—such is the simple message from her grave, and one that may still every fear and comfort every doubting soul.

Perhaps there are none so disposed to give up all for lost as those who have been drawn back after having known something of a Saviour's love. Perhaps you are feeling this. You see that Christ is able to save those who have been hitherto most careless, or most ungodly; but the aggravation of your sin is that you have gone back. You are a backslider: you have done much harm to others by this; you have grievously dishonoured Christ. But all this puts no limit to His grace. It is the greatest reason for humility, but no reason whatever for despair. Christ has raised up many who have fallen, and kept them afterward by His grace. Only trust Him, and walk humbly before Him: He will heal your backslidings; He will love you freely and keep you safely to the end.

But Christ shows His tender love as our Physician most of all in that *He heals His*

patients with His own precious blood. I have read of a General, in olden time, who tore off his clothes on the field of battle to bind up the wounds of his soldiers. But Christ does more: He gives Himself to be our medicine; He gives His own life-blood to heal our diseases. Other remedies indeed He employs, as preparatory to this, or as bringing it home to the conscience, or as perfecting His work in those who are saved. He sends the rod to awaken and to humble; He sends His Word to teach and enlighten; He appoints means of grace to sanctify His own: but chiefest of all is the blood of the cross applied to the conscience by the Good Spirit of God, and by faith accepted, as the ground of all hope and confidence. Oh, sinner, what a Physician is thine! What love is this,—that He gives His own blood to cleanse and heal thy soul.

But the medicine *must be taken*, or it cannot save. It will not do to look at it, to place it on the table, to speak of its valuable properties; it must be taken by the patient, or he will not recover.

A wealthy man had a little girl laid low with scarlet fever. She was his only daughter,

and he would gladly have parted with all his wealth rather than have lost her. She might have recovered, but it was absolutely necessary that she should take the medicine. But she would not do it: no efforts could succeed in inducing her to do so. So, poor girl, she died, and left a fearful blank in the home where she had been such a bright light.

Ah, sinner, take the medicine, or you will surely die. Believe in the efficacy of Christ's blood, and trust in this alone for your salvation before God. No power on earth or heaven can save the soul that rejects or makes light of the blood of Christ: God has declared this to be His chosen means of salvation, and none other will He accept instead. Whether you will hear or no, yet in God's name I do solemnly assure you that there is none other name but that of Jesus, by which you can be saved; and no other way does He save but by the blood that ransoms the sinner from destruction.

A closing word to those who have known Christ as their Healer. Be sure you commend to others this good Physician. It is always a pleasant duty for a man who himself has found

much benefit from the medical help afforded to him, to tell others who are suffering as once he did, of the one who can perfect a cure. And though we find it difficult at times, yet is it a blessed thing, in a kind and loving spirit, to tell others of Jesus and His grace. We can tell from experience how much He has done for us; we can tell, because we have proved it, that His blood has power to cleanse the conscience, and assure us of peace with God. Let us not hide within our hearts His salvation, but be telling of it from day to day; and it shall be our great and endless gain to meet with those in our Father's house, who through us have learnt to know Christ as their Physician, their Saviour, their All.

When wounded sore, the stricken soul
Lies bleeding and unbound,
One only hand, a pierced hand,
Can salve the sinner's wound.

When penitence hath wept in vain
Over some foul, dark spot,
One only stream, a stream of blood,
Can wash away the blot.

'Tis Jesus' blood that washes white,
His hand that brings relief,
His heart that's touched with all our joys,
And feeleth for our grief.

VI.

How may I know that my Sins are Forgiven ?

THE more earnestly a soul is seeking after God, the more intense will be the interest felt in this question. It is a matter that ought not to be left in uncertainty. It is certain that many and grievous sins may justly be laid to the charge of each of us ; it is certain that every act and word and thought of evil is registered in the book of remembrance ; it is certain that death will soon come, and then that judgment followeth : is it not then most needful that we have a sure testimony and witness that our debt is paid, and our account with God settled for ever ?

But is it the will of God that Christians should know for a certainty that their sin has been cancelled and blotted out ? Is it His will

that the Christian should be able, with full assurance, to rejoice that his own sin is for ever put away?

False humility would demur to this. Men admit that we ought to believe in a general way that God forgives sinners; but to believe positively, "God has forgiven my sin,"—"I am safe in Christ, and for me there is no condemnation,"—for any Christian to say or feel this, they would imagine borders very closely on pride or presumption. "It is not well to be too sure," is often the language we meet with from those who do not understand the ground of a Christian's hope.

But can we be too sure of anything which God has positively declared? Can it be wrong to rest with certainty on that for which we have the plain warrant of God's Word?

Holy Scripture makes it very clear that God would have His people rejoice in the full assurance of His pardoning mercy. David, speaking by the Holy Ghost, has said, "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." But why is this blessedness revealed, but that God's people may know it and rejoice

in it, and that others may see their joy and seek for the same exceeding privilege ?

When Christ was upon earth He loved to relieve the burdened consciences of sinners by giving them this assurance. To the woman that was a sinner, He spake the word of absolution : "Go in peace : thy sins are forgiven." To the palsied man He gave first of all the great blessing of a full remission of guilt : "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." And have we not a picture of the forgiveness granted to sinners, in the touching story of the Prodigal's return and welcome ? and could there be room for a single doubt whether or no his father had forgiven him, after the embrace of the fatherly arms and the kiss of fatherly love ?

And what do we find to be the tone of early Christianity, as set before us in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles ? Was it fear and doubt and uncertainty ? or was it not, for the most part, the comfort and joy of a sure and present salvation, sealed upon the heart by the Holy Ghost ?

Those who believed on the day of Pentecost "did eat their meat with gladness and single-

ness of heart," which they could only do for the joy of sin forgiven. The Ethiopian Eunuch, and the Philippian jailor, when they heard of Christ and believed in Him, at once rejoiced. The Corinthians, aforetime sinners beyond most, were addressed as being "washed, justified, and sanctified." The Apostle joins the Ephesians with himself, as being in possession of a present salvation: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." He assures the Colossians that the Lord had "forgiven them all trespasses." The Apostle John writes even to the youngest in the faith in the same strain: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake;" and again he tells those that believe, that he writes to them that "they might know they have eternal life."

And as we must believe that a true assurance of salvation is according to the teaching of Holy Scripture, so too it is not difficult to see that it brings glory to God. It exceedingly magnifies His free and abounding mercy, when the sinner once far off, self-condemned for innumerable

sins and transgressions, can look up to heaven with holy confidence and joy, and praise Him for turning away His anger, and blotting out all his iniquities. It magnifies also His justice, for as we see the medium of forgiveness, the finished work and perfect Atonement of the Cross, we rejoice that He is just, as well as merciful to forgive us our sins. It magnifies equally His faithfulness and truth. It becomes manifest that He fails not to fulfil His gracious promises, when the word on which we have trusted is accomplished in us.

Another thought also has often occurred to me, in answer to those who question the right of a Christian to know assuredly that he is accepted of God. Has not our Father bidden us come boldly to the throne of grace, and there pour out before Him our heart's cravings, sorrows, and desires? But how can I possibly do this without a certainty of a present forgiveness? If I had to go and make my request to a King, and I was uncertain whether the crime of rebellion, in which I had taken part, had been forgiven me, or whether he were still angry with me on account of it, how could I approach him with

any assurance of being heard and favourably received? And if I know not whether God has yet erased from His book the guilt of my rebellion against Him in years that are past, what comfort can I have in pouring out my heart before His mercy-seat? Still less, without an assured forgiveness, is it possible to abound in praise and thanksgiving, and to rejoice in the Lord alway. A guilty conscience, sin unforgiven, is like a heavy stone upon the heart; but the assurance of forgiveness removes the weight, and unlocks the lips. Then can we sing with David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.....who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases."

But if it be God's will that Christians should be able to rejoice in the assurance of His mercy, how may they best attain it? Remember, you must be forgiven before you can know it. You must have wealth before you can be conscious of its possession; you must have a purse in your pocket ere you can know that it is there. To be forgiven is the first thing; and this comes through trusting the blood of our Surety. He

who condemns himself, and accepts as the punishment due to himself the stripes laid on Christ, and thus draws near to God,—that man is at once completely absolved from all his transgressions. He stands clear from all guilt; he is justified by faith in the blood: his sins and iniquities God remembers no more. We have God's own testimony, confirmed and repeated in every possible way, to the complete forgiveness and justification of those that are thus trusting in Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.) "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) And here it is that we see the true ground of assurance. It is the Holy Spirit sealing upon the heart the reality, the eternal verity, and the personal application of such truths as these, so that they become to the soul a pillar of strength, a foundation of immovable security.

It is not the Spirit without the Word. It is not a certain undefined feeling that we are forgiven,

without knowing how or why. This is sometimes found,—and we fear it is usually a very perilous delusion,—a counterfeit of true peace. Neither is it the Word without the Spirit. It becomes merely a dead letter, a sealed book, unless the Spirit brings home the truth. It may be read by the eye, it may be heard by the ear, but till applied by the Spirit it is totally ineffectual for the salvation of the soul. But where there is true solid consolation and good hope through grace, the Comforter has been the teacher, and has brought the sinner by the Word home to God.

Try distinctly to see the steps by which the Spirit works. Sometimes they are very distinct, sometimes one accompanies the other; but we may easily discern the difference between them. The Spirit comes *as the Spirit of conviction*. See how it was at Pentecost: men who had been hitherto rejecting the Son of God, yea, and joining together to crucify and mock Him, are pierced to the quick. They see their sin; they see their fearful peril; they are pricked in their heart, and exclaim, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” And it is still the Spirit’s

work to humble men by convincing them of their sin. Often has it been that those who have been altogether careless are led to feel the burden of their sin, and seek to know by what means they may be forgiven.

The Spirit comes also as a *Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Christ*. He opens the spiritual eye to discern the suitableness, the all-sufficiency, the readiness of Christ to save. He reveals the power of His blood to cleanse, and the might of His arm to redeem and save even to the uttermost. Then comes faith: the anxious soul looks up and trusts. Still unbelief may suggest its varied doubts and possibilities of rejection, but faith takes hold of Christ in spite of them, and takes refuge under the shadow of His Cross.

The Spirit has yet another work in bringing full peace. *He comes as the Spirit of sealing*, —the Spirit of Adoption. "After that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." "Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear,

but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" "The Spirit also itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

The expression, "Abba, Father!" is very instructive. In the original we find one word for Father, in the Greek, the other in the Chaldee language, perhaps to intimate that in Christ, the East and West, the Jew and Gentile, all varieties of men, shall receive the adoption of children.

And the teaching of Paul in these passages is very plain. To believers an inward voice testifies of their relationship to God: a voice within the heart responds to the voice of God in the Word. God saith to each of those who trust in the atoning sacrifice and mediation of Jesus, "Thou art in Christ my son, my daughter, my well-beloved child." Then comes the echo from within: "Thou art my Father, my God; Thou hast brought me nigh to Thee by the blood of Thy Son. Behold, what manner of love hast Thou bestowed upon us, that we should be called Thy children!"

Neither is there any room here for vain and groundless hopes and imaginations. The witness

of the Spirit within is in exact harmony with the witness of the Word : it only affirms to the soul that which is plainly written. The Word declares that men "are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," and "that as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His Name;" and it is only when we know that by God's grace we do trust in that precious blood, that we can have assurance of forgiveness and sonship in God's family. Here, then, as it seems to me, is the means whereby we may know that sin has been forgiven. By the grace of the Spirit take firm hold of God's testimony, and humbly wait upon God for the power of the Spirit to seal the truth more and more upon the heart.

From all that has been already said we see that the assurance of forgiveness is not to be found through an absolution pronounced by a human priest. The only absolution which the ministers of Christ are warranted in giving is by the ministry of God's Holy Word. They are to declare to man the certainty of God's promises to those who truly repent and believe in Christ.

But they have no warrant for assuming the position of judge, or of giving such an absolution that the sinner can rely upon it as a ground of assured forgiveness.

Two facts are of the deepest importance as bearing on this subject. One fact is this,—that the form, *Ego te absolvo*, is found in no ancient liturgy, and until the twelfth century was never known in any branch of the Church of Christ.

The other fact is in perfect harmony with this. The form of Ordination for Priests had never before that century included the address to those ordained: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose-soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

However true it is, that in our own service they may be used in a sense thoroughly consistent with its Protestant character; yet it is worthy of our remembrance, that in no Church,—Greek, Roman Catholic, or Anglo-Saxon,—were they used for more than a thousand years.

There are also auxiliary evidences of forgiven sin, which ought not to be overlooked. Where sin has been forgiven the conscience will be able

to testify of its undivided reliance on the blood of the Cross.

Just as I am : and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come !

Where sin has been forgiven, it makes men frank, honest, open with the heart-searching God. "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven...and in whose spirit there is no guile." The unforgiven soul needs a cloke, and numberless excuses, and a self-righteous covering for its sin and neglect. But the forgiven man desires to lay bare before the eye of the Heart-searcher every evil in thought, in motive, in word, and in deed. If you had but an old suit of clothes you might wish to make the best of them, however ragged and unfit for use ; but if a new and clean suit were given you, you would be quite willing to cast away the former.

He who has in his possession the new and clean robe of a perfect justification in Christ, abhors and casts away his former coverings of vain and worthless dependencies.

Where sin has been forgiven, there will ever

be an earnest desire to serve God. "The blood of Christ purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.) "He who is married to Christ will bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4.) The faith which justifies works by love, and love is a very diligent and active servant. The same Spirit, too, which witnesses of pardon and adoption, is the Spirit of zeal and obedience; and he who truly possesses it cannot fail to catch the spirit of those heavenly hosts who ever obey His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word.

Dear reader, judge yourself. If you trust that you have been graciously forgiven, is there something of all this manifest in your life and conversation?

It may be that some one who reads these pages has not yet found full assurance. Still, if you are humbly drawing near to God through Christ, be not discouraged: do not unchristianize yourself because you are not yet absolutely sure of your acceptance: be not content with uncertainty, but go forward to learn more of Christ and His free mercy, and pray for the presence of

the Spirit in your heart. Meanwhile give no heed to despairing thoughts. I can imagine many an Israelite, though securely sheltered beneath the blood of the Paschal Lamb, might have a trembling fear as he thought of the angel of destruction passing through the land. Be sure you take shelter beneath the blood, and by and by God will give you the full assurance of faith and hope by the power of the Spirit.

But if, on the other hand, you are enabled to rejoice and to appropriate to yourself, with full confidence, the blessing of Christ's salvation, let it have a very wholesome sanctifying effect. You have a joy that many Christians have not; therefore let the joy of the Lord be your strength in working, or in suffering for His name's sake. Watch against the uprising of anything like spiritual pride; temper joy with a holy fear of grieving the Good Spirit, or dishonouring the Saviour. Do not let your joy effervesce in mere excitement, or even in speaking always about it; but let it take the direction of much prayer, praise, and witness-bearing in an evil world.

When steam is generated it may escape without effecting any good result, or it may work

machinery fashioning most valuable fabrics. Thus we may see the importance of the Christian's joy having a practical tendency. Let there be no waste of power; let sound judgment, and a spirit of self-denial and willing toil come in and utilize the joy and peace that the Lord has granted you. Think of your friends who are yet without Christ, and pray for them, and endeavour to win them for Christ. Think of the myriads in our large towns, and the scattered ones of our villages and hamlets, who have no saving knowledge of God, and strive to guide the footsteps of some amongst them into the way of peace.

“Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

VII.

Stones in the Way.

THE title of this chapter gives us rather a different illustration from "Steps Across." We imagine a highway to the Heavenly City: travellers are here and there passing along; but there are difficulties. Some carry heavy burdens, and do not always see the Friend who would carry them for them; some are tired and weary by the length of the way, or through the burning heat of the sun. Besides this, there are stones,—large rough stones,—here and there placed by one who hates the pilgrims; and when night comes, and the light is dim, many a pilgrim is apt to stumble and fall, and thus lose much time and be sore troubled. Now it would be a great advantage if we could remove these stones, or some of them, or at least warn travellers of

the danger they are likely to meet with, so that they may not dash the foot against them, but pass by on the other side. Besides, it was the command of the King that we should take up the stumbling-block out of the way of His people; and we ought to do our best to obey this command.

There are many of these stones of stumbling, and I will do my best to remove a few. Very thankful shall I be, dear reader, if I could remove any one that may hinder you.

(1) "I can't pray." Here is a very common difficulty. You kneel down and try to be very earnest, and wish to confess your sins and ask God for His grace and mercy; but your heart feels cold and dead, and wandering thoughts come in, and you think about things you ought not, and you rise from your knees with less hope and comfort than when you knelt down. It may help you to overcome this, to remember when you kneel down that Jesus is close by, and places His ear so as to catch the faintest whisper. Do not think too much about your praying; but rather think of Jesus, and His loving invitations, and how great is the privilege

He grants you of asking whatsoever you will in His name. If you think of this you will find it helps you in prayer; and be assured, too, that a wish, a look, a sigh is acceptable to Him. It may help you, too, if, before you begin to pray, you call to mind some promise, as Matt. xi. 28, or Heb. iv. 16, or John xiv. 13, 14; or try to think of Christ as your High Priest standing before the throne of God presenting your petitions. Then, too, it is a comfort to remember God has promised His Spirit to help us: He will give you, by and by, such happy, trustful thoughts of the Father and of Jesus, that prayer will cease to be a burden and become to you a real pleasure.

(2) "I fear I am not one of the elect." Here is another objection to the exercise of faith in Christ. It is the purpose of our great enemy, by any means, to keep back souls from trusting the Saviour, and so we find he often strives to pervert the doctrines of the Bible for this purpose. But you never find the doctrine of election so taught in Scripture as to discourage any one: it is never placed between the sinner and Christ. You are never told to find out that you are one

of God's elect before you may trust Christ. It is never intended to interfere with the free promise,—“Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” You must rise up from the lower step to the higher: you must begin with acknowledging your sin and simply trusting in Christ and you will rise at length to the assurance of your election.

We read in the Epistle of Peter, that those to whom he wrote were “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Take hold of these lower links of the chain: see that you go to Jesus to sprinkle you with His blood; see that you look for the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit; see that you are walking in obedience to God's commands, and then you may be assured that God holds in His hand the uppermost link of your salvation,—His own everlasting purpose of mercy towards you. This is the only possible way. No one can look into the book of God's purposes. But if we trust Jesus, and follow Him, and long to love God and walk in His commands, we

need not doubt for a moment His everlasting love.

If any reader be tempted to stay away from Christ because of this fear, I would remind such a one of the woman of Canaan. The Saviour Himself seemed to place a barrier somewhat of this kind in her way. He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But what did she do? Did she go away saying, "I see it is useless for me to expect the blessing"? Nay! She went closer: she fell at His feet and worshipped Him. She cried, "Lord, help me!" Her persevering faith overcame this and every obstacle, and Christ crowned her faith with a glorious reward.

Even thus let it be with you: let nothing keep you back. Only trust Christ; only continue at His footstool, and this and every other hindrance will be removed.

(3) "I often think I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that God has forsaken me; and therefore it is of no avail for me to think of being saved."

Such a temptation as this is a fearful stumbling-block in the path of some few. It comes about

in many ways: very often from having made an inconsistent profession, or from having been drawn back into a worldly life, or from some particular sin; or perhaps from reading the life of some very devoted Christian who has risen to a very high standard of love and holiness. It is very often grounded on a mistaken view of such passages as Heb. vi. 4—6, or Heb. x. 26—29.

I have no doubt whatever that these solemn words were spoken to warn the Hebrews against apostacy from faith. After having embraced the Gospel, if they cast it off and rejected it, where could they look for help? Other sacrifice but that of Christ there was none; and if they refused this, and trampled on the precious blood, they must perish in their sins. Besides, they might grieve the Spirit in so doing that He might leave them to utter indifference, blindness, and impenitency; and then with a hardened heart and seared conscience they would live and die in their sins. But from the whole tenor of Scripture it is quite out of the question that such passages are intended to shut the door against any who have fallen, however greatly or wilfully, if only they will yet turn again.

I feel perfectly certain that if any person is anxious with reference to this sin, or if they have one desire to be forgiven and saved by Christ, it is a manifest proof that, however sinful and unworthy they may be, they have not committed the unpardonable sin.

(4) "I am too wicked to hope for mercy." There was once a man in Wolverhampton lying on a sick bed, and a friend came to speak with him about the Saviour. When the friend entered his room, he fixed his eyes on him and said, "I am such a sinner that even God Almighty can't save me." "Very well," said the friend, "then you can do something greater than God; if your sin is greater than His mercy you must be greater than God." The thought startled him, and he was led to see the evil of limiting the Holy One of Israel.

Dear reader, be not guilty of the same thing. God delighteth in mercy, and He will abundantly pardon. You are but a man, and therefore your sins—however great—are but *finite*: but God is God, and His mercies *infinite*.

Remember, too, the infinite efficacy of the blood of the cross. So precious is that blood in

the sight of God, that if your sins were as many as the united sins of the whole town in which you live, and at the moment you read these lines you take shame to yourself on account of them and come nigh to God, trusting only in that precious blood, this very hour, this very moment, they shall all be cast into the depth of the sea, and you may stand before God as free from all charge of guilt as if you had never sinned.

(5) "If I were to come to Christ I should never be able to persevere, and therefore it is wiser not to begin." Until the last few years of my ministry, I had no idea that a thought of this kind was so great an obstacle to many, who are yet very seriously impressed. It takes various shapes: sometimes it refers to one particular hindrance in a man's family, or business, or in the society in which he mingles; it may be a quarrel that has long existed, or a bitter feeling cherished in the heart of a relative, or a course of petty dishonesty in trade that a man knows not how to break through; sometimes it is a kind of general persuasion, that the religion of Christ demands a walk and conversation which is im-

possible in the common routine of daily life ; and this being so, a man argues, that as back-sliding is so dangerous a sin, he will not yet enter on a Christian course. But this objection arises very much from a partial view of Christ's salvation. Persons do not see how completely Jesus saves those who come to Him. Take an illustration : it is a thought I lately met with, but it may be carried further than was done by the writer.

Suppose you were drowning in the water, and the sea-shore not far off, but this shore a long distance from your own home and the journey a very dangerous one. A friend comes to rescue and save you from a watery grave. But should you refuse his help, because you might meet with perils afterward on your way home ?

But suppose that friend not only offered to save your life, but to accompany you along your way and not leave you till he had conducted you in safety to the town or village you desired to reach. Surely now you will thankfully accept his proffered help.

But how is it with Jesus ? He sees you

perishing in your sins ; He comes nigh ; He offers at once to lift you up from your present condition of guilt and condemnation, and place your foot on the solid rock of acceptance and justification before God. But He offers more than this : He will be your Guide, Protector, Shepherd. He will go with you every step of your homeward journey ; He will shield you in the hour of temptation ; He will keep you from the power of the great adversary : He will not leave you nor forsake you till He hath done all that He has promised.

Let not then the fear of the future keep you from Christ. Cast upon Him the Past, for He will forgive ; the Present, for He is near, by your very side ; the Future, for He can keep and save to the uttermost. Not a sorrow lies before you, but His arm will sustain you in the endurance of it. Not a temptation will meet you, but He will be ready to supply grace to overcome it.

A few years ago a young lady was anxiously seeking Christ ; but her chief anxiety was a fear that she would fall back. She could not see how it was possible she could overcome all the

snare that might entangle her. But one day she opened a small Testament which she carried in her pocket. She noticed the precious assurance given in Jude 24 ver.: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." This was enough. She saw that Christ could keep the soul that leaned on Him, even to the day of His appearing. She trusted the Saviour fully: she honoured Him by a holy, devoted life. And not long ago, after a very happy Christian course, she fell asleep in Christ.

(6) There is one other stone in the way that ought not to be passed over. Many inquirers find little comfort because they have a *divided heart*. "Their heart is divided: now shall they be found faulty." "Woe be to the double-minded and to the sinner that goeth two ways." "The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

A partial obedience like that of Saul in the matter of Amalek, a partial surrender as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, brings great disquietude, and fails to impart any true rest of spirit. Too many are determined to hold fast

by the world, and yet wish to have the peace of Christ. Too many wish to live for themselves and to walk in their own ways, and yet would have Christ by their side to forgive and to save. And so they journey on, sometimes with a ray of hope, and sometimes all in darkness, because Christ will not be the minister of sin, or give His Spirit to abide with those that keep back from Him a part of their heart, or walk in ways that grieve and dishonour Him.

Perhaps, dear reader, conscience whispers, "This has been my case: but what can I do? The world has great power over me; but I would follow Christ fully if I could."

Then I would say, Let there be a full trust in His love, a full reliance on all His gracious promises, an entire dependence on Him for everything,—for pardon, for holiness, for happiness, for things temporal and things spiritual; and then in the strength of this faith make an unreserved surrender of yourself and all you have to His service. Be assured, it is the want of faith that leads to this half-heartedness and reserve in our obedience. He who asks with a wavering and doubting spirit is the double-

mindful man. (See James i. 6—8.) On the other hand, Abraham, so strong in faith, was a very Prince amongst those remarkable for their obedience. And it is easy to see why this is so. Faith puts men in possession of riches and peace and joy in God, and where a man has these he is satisfied, though all else should fail; whilst unbelief robs men of their true portion, or of their enjoyment of it, and so they run hither and thither to find a little comfort and help in some earthly thing.

Be it yours then to find your all in God. Drink more and more deeply of the river of His pleasure. When disappointment and sorrow darken your path, flee straightway to your Hiding-Place, and find in God the solace for all human woe. When cares and anxieties oppress your spirit, spread them before the mercy-seat, as Hezekiah spread the letter of the King of Assyria, and with an eye of humble expectation wait for deliverance from God alone.

Beware of all human reliances and the very least departures from a plain obedience to His commands. Trust in God, wait on God, keep the strait path of His precepts; and in the end

the rough shall be made smooth, and all that seems for a time dark and gloomy shall be made as clear as the day.

From thy habitation holy,
Spirit of all truth descend,
While we sinners, poor and lowly,
At Thy throne of mercy bend :
Help our weakness,—
And a gracious answer send !

Come Thou, as the dew of Hermon
Softly falls on Zion's hill,
Let us in Thy strength determine
Henceforth to obey Thy will,—
Dwell within us :
Let Thy grace our bosoms fill.

Brooding o'er us, as on chaos,
Cause our darkness to retreat ;
Shine into our hearts, and lay us
Humbled at the mercy-seat :
Guide us, use us
As Thy Sovereign love sees meet.

When we tread the waves of Jordan,
Oh, be near us, Sacred Guest !
Seal to us our hope of pardon ;
Dovelike o'er each billow's crest
Do Thou hover,—
Guiding to eternal rest.

VIII.

The Stray One Recalled.

IN the whole revelation which God has given us there is nothing which brings home to us our Father's tender compassion for sinners more than His appeals to the backsliding. We find this especially the case in the books of Jeremiah and Hosea. He complains of the strange ingratitude of His people in thus turning away from Him : "O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel ? a land of darkness ? wherefore say my people, We are lords ; we will come no more unto Thee ?" (Jer. ii. 31.) He reminds them how foolish and unwise it is thus to forsake the alone source of true happiness. "My people have committed two evils : they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns,

broken cistern, that can hold no water." It is a very forcible image that is here employed. God is a Fountain, a Well of Life: He is the source and spring of all true life, pleasure, holiness, hope. In Him is a continual freshness of all that can fill the soul with joy; in Him are inexhaustible streams of mercy, grace, and consolation. But men forsake this *Fountain* for *cisterns*; yea, more, for *broken* cisterns, from which soon leak out the few drops of water they may contain.

A traveller in the Holy Land tells us that in one part he found the land riddled and honey-combed with the remains of these broken cisterns, and that the foot of his horse was again and again caught in one of them. When water was needed, they would just dig in the earth one of these little clay cisterns; it would hold water for a time, but soon, when the sun was hot and weather dry, it would crack and leak; and so another and another would be needed. Ah, what pains and trouble men take in hewing out cisterns like these! Wealth unsanctified by true riches, the acquisition of knowledge with no end beyond its possession, a

position and name that shall dazzle those around, schemes of self-indulgence, a comfortable home where God is forgotten, some object of affection which engrosses every thought,—how often something of this kind steals the heart from God. But before long there is sure to be a crack, a leak, and the joy and the comfort is dried up and gone! So God in His tender compassion would have men see this, and remember that nothing can ever take the place of Himself as their Wellspring of joy.

And how marvellous in pitiful compassion are the exhortations and entreaties which God addresses to His people, beseeching them to return back to Him. He does not hide from them the greatness of their sin: He sets it before them in all its aggravation. He speaks of it as the adultery of the wife treacherously forsaking a faithful husband; He tells them how repeated has been the provocation, for they have sought after many lovers; He reminds them how utterly hardened and shameless had they become, and how they had polluted the whole land with their wickedness. And then, over against this dark background of their iniquity,

He reveals His free mercy and willingness to restore them to His fatherly love: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever." "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God." (Jer. iii. 4, 12, 22. See the whole chapter.)

Surely no words could express more clearly God's mercy to Israel, in spite of all their backslidings against Him; and it is a pattern of God's mercy and longsuffering toward backsliders in all ages. He is ever the same. It is true there is grievous ingratitude and great peril in this sin: it grieves the Spirit, and hardens the heart; it discourages young beginners, and puts a stumbling-block in the way of the ungodly; it may lead to a total and final apostacy from which there is no recovery; but, nevertheless, where conscience still wakes, and there is the

very least desire to return to the fold, God will never reject the trembling penitent.

Let us consider for a while this backsliding spirit, and how it arises, and how the soul may be restored from it. The idea is taken from the heifer: "Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer." The heifer has the yoke placed on its neck, to go forward into the field and plough the land; but instead of this it pulls back, rebels against the yoke, and endeavours to cast it off: it slides back little by little, and shrinks from its appointed work. And thus it is often seen in the Church of God: men are called to bear the easy yoke of Christ; they profess to accept it, and yet instead of going forward, faithfully obeying the Saviour's precepts, they turn away, cast aside His yoke, and go back to a life of worldliness or sin.

This spirit is often found in two classes of persons. I believe it is most frequently found amongst those who have never gone far. Perhaps they have had Christian parents, and religious privileges; they have had convictions of sin; they have seen the blessedness of having their portion in Christ; they have out-

wardly enrolled themselves amongst His followers; and this is all. They have never had close, personal dealings with Christ; they have never cast themselves upon Him for salvation; they have never yielded their hearts to Him, desiring to be His alone. So that in this case we need not be surprised that they go back. They have the form, but not the power and life of godliness; and so after a little temporary profession, we find them gone back to the world which they had renounced.

It was thus with the followers of Christ who were offended because of the hard saying. They had never cast in their lot with Him to follow Him whithersoever He went; they had never trusted in His mercy, nor seen His true glory: so, after a while, they went back and walked no more with Him. It was precisely the same with Judas. His heart was not whole with Christ: he was a covetous man from the beginning; so, by and by, his sin grew stronger and led him even to betray his Master.

But in Christ's true disciples we often see something of the same spirit. Perhaps we should have imagined that after conversion it

would have been impossible for the Christian ever to go back ; but practically this is not the case.

One of the greatest Saints in the Old Testament, and one of the chief pillars of the Church in the New Testament have both left us an example of the danger of falling back. With David for two long years the altar was unfrequented, prayer either omitted or but a dead form, no Psalm penned, no holy desire arising : all was dark and heavy overhead, and God and he were as strangers one to the other. It was the same with the Apostle chosen to open the door of faith both to Jew and Gentile. The warm-hearted, zealous Peter looked for a season as if he were altogether an apostate from His Lord.

Nor need we be surprised that the people of God are exposed to this danger. Consider what mighty agencies are brought to bear upon the young believer with the purpose of utterly overthrowing his faith. He wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers : the great adversary has in his hand ways and means to overthrow the weak one

that at present we can little comprehend. Then there is the dead weight of the old nature still striving for the mastery in dragging the soul down to the world's level : a thousand influences for evil are about us on every side ; so that if the Christian be not strengthened abundantly with grace from above, if he fail to watch and pray, if secret duties are lightly passed by,—there is no wonder if the power of evil get the upper hand, and his religion become a dry and withered thing ; if, instead of being like the tree growing and flourishing by the rivers of water, he become like the heath in a desert land.

A few thoughts on the story of Peter's fall and recovery may keep back some one who is in danger, and may be a word in season to restore another who has turned aside.

Ah, Peter, I see thee a rock, standing firm and confident in thine own strength ! Thou wert to be a rock, because knit to the great Rock, and one with Him ; but now thou boastest of thine own goodness and purpose : “ Though all shall be offended, yet will not I,”—“ If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise.” Hast thou not learnt thy lesson yet, Peter ? Re-

member the winds and waves, and how soon thy faith failed thee! Were it not wise to be more humble,—more distrustful of thine own heart?

Here is our first lesson. Our weakness is our strength: self-reliance is a sure precursor of a fall. Believer, keep on low ground: never speak of the triumphs you will win, or the temptations you will overcome. If you stand fast, the Master must hold you up, and pride and self-glorying will drive Him from your side.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” “He resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the lowly.”

But I see Peter in another light: not now a *rock*, standing firm; but a *reed*, shaken by the wind. Once, twice, thrice I hear him denying the Lord who loved him: ashamed of the Lord of glory for fear of a maid-servant; and when His Lord was about to lay down His life for his sake, turning his back upon Him, yea, with oaths and curses.

And is this, Simon, all the proof thou canst give of thy faithfulness? Is this thy boasted supremacy over all the rest? Is this thy willingness even to die with Christ? A strange

contrast this to thy confession of Christ as the Son of the blessed, and the honour thy Saviour gave thee: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven!"

But let me trace the downward steps. Not all at once came this fearful fall. In the garden I see thee sleeping, instead of praying: "Simon, sleepest *thou*?" I hear the Master saying,—Satan is just about to assault thee, and it were well for thee to be girding on thine armour to resist him. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Let me remember this: if I would be safe, I must keep up prayer: it must be a reality. I must pray for the spirit of prayer; I must guard against interruptions in prayer; I must watch, lest sloth and indolence and forgetfulness of danger lull me into a false security, and Satan find me sleeping at my post.

But another step downward. I see Peter showing off his zeal by rash and hasty blows. The sword is quickly unsheathed: without asking counsel from the Master, he begins to fight bravely, as he thinks, that he may fulfil his vow. "Nay, Peter, put up thy sword: I

have not bidden thee do this; but I ask thee to be faithful. Only follow Me and hold fast your faith in my name." I must beware here also. Christ wants not a showy, noisy zeal; but He wants me to do His bidding and tread in His footsteps. When He calls me to the very fiercest conflict, let me be ready to go: let me be ready to gird on the sword of the Spirit and go forth in His name when the time comes; meanwhile let me be willing to suffer with Him, and then I shall reign with Him.

Yet another downward step. *Peter follows afar off.* He is now afraid of the consequences of his own conduct; He trembles lest he should be recognised: so he falls back in the crowd. O Saviour, keep me very nigh Thee! May I never lose sight of Thee,—Thy loving smile, Thy power to help by a look, by a word. May I never leave Thy companionship because there may be danger; but may I cleave to Thee the closer for help to be faithful!

Then see Peter *seeking His own comfort.* Whilst the Master is witnessing a good confession, and is bearing the taunts and indignities of the chief priests, Peter stands by the fire

warming himself, instead of standing close to the Master and showing that at least there is one not afraid to own His cause. If I would be faithful I must beware of this snare also. The Lord delighteth in the happiness and comfort of His servants, and would not have me refuse, without a needs-be, the blessings He gives. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving." But I must ever be ready at His bidding to relinquish all. To honour Him I must deny myself and take up my cross daily. Rest, friends, yea, food and raiment, yea, life itself, let me be willing to sacrifice to Him who gave Himself for me.

Then, too, we see Peter *mingling with the servants*: he is making friends of those who share the guilt of crucifying the Lord. He talks with them in tone and manner as if he were one with them. Thus another step is taken. We must ever avoid the company of the Lord's enemies. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Then comes the climax. The fear of man has supplanted the fear of God : he is ashamed of the Master, lie after lie comes from the lips of him who had once witnessed so good a confession : an oath is employed to confirm the lie : and Peter has fallen as low as well he can.

O Lord, keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me ! Never let the fear of man rule in my heart ! Why shall I fear one who soon shall return to the dust whence he was taken, when I have Thee as my faithful and Almighty Friend ? Oh, let me confess Thy name even before Kings, and never, never be ashamed of Thy Word, Thy Gospel, or Thy service !

But we have yet to look at Peter in another light. *A wandering sheep restored by the faithful care of the Good Shepherd.* His sin was all his own ; his recovery was all of grace : his self-confidence, his neglect of prayer, his fear of man brought him into the pit ; but the hand of his unfailing Guardian rescued him.

Judas falls : and finally, for in him there was no root of true grace : Satan enters into him and brings him to destruction both of body and

soul. Peter falls: but the Saviour leaves him not in the hands of his adversary, but lifts him up and places his foot again upon the rock.

Thou knowest the way to bring me back,
My fallen spirit to restore :
Oh, for Thy truth and mercy sake
Forgive, and bid me sin no more !
The ruins of my soul repair
And make my heart a house of prayer.

Christ pleads beforehand. He foresees the plot of the enemy for the overthrow of His disciple, and He prays for him: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

It is a comforting thought that Jesus foresees all our temptations, all the assaults of the enemy, all our backslidings; and in view of all, He pleads for each soul that relies on His all-prevailing name. Hence there is a limit placed to the power of Satan: there is restoring grace granted. The fall is great, but not final; the mercy that called the sinner at first, recalls him from his backsliding. The Saviour uses means to recall His disciple: the sign foretold takes place; it was but a simple thing, the crowing of the cock, but it was enough to bring

back all the past, and especially the Master's warning, and his own broken vows. Then there was *the look*: "He turned and looked on Peter." Chiding, remembrance, pity and tenderest love, all mingled in that look.

And withal the good Spirit of God is at work: without this all else were in vain: but He works, and none shall let it: He teaches and humbles as none else can. And we see Peter, who just before is denying his Master so boldly and daringly, now leaving the High Priest's palace, going home to weep and lament his treachery, his falseness, and the grief he has thus caused the Lord who loved him. And Christ sees it all. He has heard the threefold denial, the oaths, the curses; but He hears also his sighs, his confessions, and marks every tear he sheds. He who heard the prayer of Nathanael beneath the fig-tree, hears equally the sorrowful sighing of His repentant disciple; and He freely loves, and freely forgives all: "Go and tell my disciples and Peter," is His first command. He commits again to him the care of His Church when He bids him "feed His sheep;" and He gives him grace boldly to confess His name

before the great assembly of the chief priests and elders.

The narrative has its lesson of blessed hope and encouragement to any who would retrace their steps after forsaking Christ. The Good Shepherd still loves to restore wanderers to His fold. To those who have turned back and would return to Him, as to those who seek Him for the first time, He still declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." He points you to the example of Peter, and reminds you that, after the greatest fall, He still opens to you the door of mercy. Whether in former days you have ever truly known His love or not, whether you have only gone a little way and then turned back, or whether you have turned aside after having experienced very much of His special goodness,—in either case He invites you to come home, and find your everlasting rest in Himself as a merciful and faithful Redeemer.

The story of Peter's restoration shows plainly the track by which you may return to the fold: "Peter went out and wept bitterly." He went out: he sought where He might be alone. Per-

chance he went to the lonely garden where awhile before his Master had been apprehended, and under the quiet shade of olive trees poured out his soul before God : he was alone with God and his own conscience ; and as he confessed his sin, and wept, and prayed, doubtless the Omniscient Saviour marked it all. He who marked Nathanael under the fig-tree marked Peter also, and we may be sure met him with the comfort of His forgiving mercy.

Here is the true Confessional ! alone with God ! alone with my great High Priest ! keeping back nothing from Him, but telling everything unto His merciful ear. Alas, that men should introduce another confessional, and should teach that Christian people must tell their sins to a human priest, and obtain through him the absolution which Christ loves to bestow freely on all who come to Him ; what is this, but the overthrow of the blessed Gospel of grace and salvation ? What is this, but to deny that Christ is as ready and willing to give pardon to the penitent as He proclaims Himself to be ? What is this, but to give the lie to His blessed promise, "*Come unto Me*, all ye that labour and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ? What is this setting up of a man-made Confessional, but to usurp and throw into the shade the true Confessional which the Saints in all ages have loved to frequent ?

But if, like Peter, you have fallen back and forsaken the Saviour, remember the way of return is open. Christ is still the same as ever : a great Saviour for great sinners. Do not hearken to the suggestions of unbelief : do not suppose that because of special aggravations of your offence, it is impossible Christ should pardon and save you. In Peter's case there was almost every possible aggravation of his sin, yet in spite of all he was mercifully welcomed.

Do not think that because you have thus departed from God, your heart is now so hardened and insensible that you can never again experience the power of His love. Only believe that He is ready to pardon, that He delights to give His Spirit to them that call upon Him, that He still beholds you with fatherly compassion, and His love will rekindle yours ; and with a deeper self-abasement, with more entire dependence upon Divine grace, you

will still prove more than conqueror over all evil, within and without.

A young man in India was fearfully persecuted by his relations for desiring to be a Christian. For a season he stood firm, but at last gave way, and forsook Christ. But he had no peace. He felt an aching void within : he knew that none but Christ could really satisfy. About ten months after he met his old teacher : he said, "Will Christ take me back again ? Did He not take Peter, and will He not take me ?" So he once again came back to the Saviour. He renounced Hindooism ; He cast away his Brahminical thread. He was openly baptized in the Church, and the one desire of his life hereafter was to follow Christ. In some such words as these he expressed it :—

"Nought on earth to me be given ;
Nought I want, but Christ and heaven."

IX.

On the Necessity and Right Position of Good Works.

I KNOW of no subject of deeper importance to the well-being of the Church of God than the rightful position of good works in the scheme of Christian doctrine. Put them in a wrong position, and you dishonour the work of Christ and put a stumbling-block in the path of anxious souls. Place them on a true scriptural basis and you tend greatly to edify the body of Christ.

The Apostle Paul had very special wisdom given to him by the Spirit of God in this matter. Look, for example, at two of his Epistles,—that addressed to the Ephesians and also that addressed to Titus. In both of these, with the utmost emphasis, he altogether casts

out good works from the foundation of a Christian's hope; and yet, immediately afterwards, speaks of them as most necessary in a believer's life. (Eph. ii. 8—10.) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is here declared to be God's gift, His free, unmerited gift of grace and love, not in any way coming to us through our works or strivings, but accepted and received by the hand of faith.

But is there no place left for good works? Surely there is. For the Apostle goes on to refer to them as the very object for which God hath wrought in us His work of new creating, and as the path He hath laid down for us to walk in. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

In the same spirit does the Apostle dwell upon them in the Epistle to Titus. As to the source of our hope, the spring of our confidence, we are to regard it only as the free love and pity of our Saviour God, quite independent of

any works of righteousness, past or future. (Titus iii. 4—7.) “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” In this passage we see the free mercy of God bestowing upon us two unspeakable benefits, both alike indispensable for salvation: (1) a new power; (2) a new position.

(1) Christians receive through God's grace a new power. In themselves, by nature, foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and passions, they receive, through Christ, the quickening, cleansing, sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, poured down upon them in rich abundance. If, as it is probable, there is a reference to baptism in the expression, “the washing of regeneration,” it is very evident that the blessing is enjoyed only when there is with it the effectual saving might of the Spirit, so working as to

raise the soul to a new life. Too often, alas, men have the outward visible sign, but the true baptism, the heart purified by faith and love, is altogether wanting.

Wherever this is the case, there is no regeneration, no indwelling grace of the Holy Ghost. Nor is this the least opposed to the view of our Church in her Baptismal Service. True, she speaks of a child as regenerate after baptism, but is not this simply in harmony with the principle that runs through all her services? Is not every service *for believers, and for them only?* Does she *not always accept the profession as a reality, and leave it to God to search the heart?* In the Marriage and Burial Services this is evidently the case. In the Catechism, she puts into the mouth of the catechumen the answer, "I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God;" but is this true of any but of those who believe? In a similar way she puts into their lips the words declaring, with reference to baptism, "wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." So again, she tells us that the

inward grace is "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature children of wrath we are hereby made the children of grace."

All this is perfectly true wherever baptism has been a reality, and in the case of all those who can truly say that the Spirit sanctifies them. But what if there be no repentance, no faith, no sign of grace in the child as it grows up? Repentance and faith, though promised on their behalf, are absent. So too is the regeneration professed on their behalf.

The marks of the new birth, as given in Holy Scripture, are too plain to be mistaken. "Minding the things of the Spirit," "led by the Spirit," "not committing sin," *i.e.*, not living in the practice of it, "the Spirit of love," "overcoming the world," "believing in the Son of God," "love of the brethren,"—where these are found, there only is the power of the new birth. (See Rom. viii., and first Epistle of John throughout.)

And without this new power, there can be no fitness for a better world nor possibility of the performance of good works. Make the tree good, and his fruit good; or the tree corrupt,

brace you for fresh work in the Lord's vineyard.

It is very interesting to mark how very strongly, in this Epistle to Titus, Christians are exhorted to a life abounding in good works, and are reminded that their absence is a plain proof that their profession of faith is unreal. In the first chapter he speaks of certain members of the Cretian Church (i. 16): "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." He bids Titus (ii. 7) "Show himself a pattern of good works." He declares (ii. 14) that Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*." He reminds Titus of his duty to exhort his flock (iii. 1) "to be ready to every good work." He bids him again (iii. 8) affirm constantly the blessed truths of salvation, for this very intent, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." And then again he adds, at the close of the Epistle (iii. 14), that Christians must "maintain good works for

necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." The whole testimony of the Epistle is precisely in accordance with the Epistle of James, showing that both Apostles alike agree, that faith without works is dead, being alone. And a very worthless, profitless thing is a faith that talks of Christ, and professes to hold fast very steadfastly all necessary truth, unless it leads to holy, watchful, consistent living.

In the outskirts of London, years ago, I have often looked at great blocks of skeleton houses: their walls were reared high, but then they were left. They had no windows, no roof,—all empty, cold, and bleak; the wind rushes in and howls piteously as it passes through many a crevice and unfinished doorway. There they stand, for month after month, yea, year after year,—a monument of the folly or poverty of him who began to build, but was unable to finish. Whilst in other houses, not far distant, you can discern the pleasant warmth of the fire, and chambers filled with goodly furniture, and hear the voices of prattling children, and the notes of cheerful music, within these bare walls all is desolation, yea, the silence of death.

And many such-like skeleton Christians are to be found in the world. There is a tolerably good foundation of knowledge in the doctrines of Holy Scripture. What our state by nature, what justification and sanctification are, what Christ has done, and what His office is in man's salvation,—all this is fairly well understood; but beyond this there is no progress: there is no superstructure of Holy Living; or if there is anything, it is but a cold morality. Where is the warm fire of love and zeal? Where is the costly furniture of all loving deeds and words? Where the sweet music of prayer, and the cheerful notes of praise and thanksgiving? Where the roofing in of watchful heed against the temptations that befall us, or the lights of faith and hope, or the thousand little acts of courtesy and thoughtfulness done out of love to Christ, which might shut out so many a chilling blast from those around our fireside? Alas, nothing of all this is to be seen! There, within that heart, reigneth but too plainly the desolation of spiritual poverty and the silence of spiritual death.

But where grace has indeed come, it is far

otherwise; and it is the part of the Christian to stir up his own heart more and more to do God's will, and to abound in every good word and work.

In His own home the Christian must be especially careful. It is here we are most at our ease, and here character most clearly comes out. It is here that a diligent guard must be set over tongue and temper,—over little infirmities and irritabilities, over clouded looks and wayward passions, over doing wrong things or doing right things in a wrong way. Very bitter has been the regret, in many a case when it has been too late, that the feelings of those at home have not been more consulted; or that wife, or husband, or child has been a thorn in the side of one who now lies silent in the grave.

In the Church of God, the Master asks of the true disciple a three-fold ministry. There must be a ministry of cheerful, large-hearted gifts. It may be that such gifts may amount but to shillings, or they may reach to thousands of pounds; but the Master asks willingness, and readiness to give, and self-denial to enable us to give more, and *proportion* between the amount

retained for our own use and that given to Him.

The story of the widow and her offering will never cease to instruct the Church of God that Christ marks all who give, and that He marks also the substance which we possess as well as the gift which we present.

There must also be a ministry of *personal service*. Ah, give not only money, but the *gold of time*, to do work for God, for His Church, for the souls of poor and rich, of sick and strong, of young and old. Nothing is more needed than this. The Church needs workers in every rank and position. Who will go forth and cast in the net of Gospel truth, or at least the line to catch individual souls, and bring them to the shore of peace and salvation? It is a blessed thing to see, as I have seen, young Christians giving up spare hours, visiting in courts and allies, gathering together the outcasts, and endeavouring to read or speak to them the message of God's wonderful love to sinners.

Then there is the *ministry of prayer*: this is stronger than all, more surely successful than all. Not that God is wont to dispense with the

means which He has appointed, in the Word of life being proclaimed as the power of God unto salvation ; but it is prayer which draws down the blessing, and makes the Gospel efficacious in the conversion of souls. Blessed is he who gives with free hand and willing mind ! Still more blessed is he who works for Christ, toiling on in the Master's service ! And even more blessed still is he who in the Spirit has power with God, and whose prayers avail for the good of many ! But more blessed than all is he who combines this three-fold ministry, and to the very utmost of His power both gives and works and prays, and then casts down himself, his gifts, his labours, his prayers at the footstool of Jesus, and looks to Him to pardon all that is amiss through His blood, and to prosper all that is done aright through the grace of His Almighty Spirit.

There is one other agency for good which ought not to be omitted. We can scarcely form any adequate idea of *the power of influence*. It has been beautifully compared to the shadow of Peter passing by, which overshadowed the sick laid along the road, and which seems, in

God's ordering, to have been the means of their restoration. (Acts v. 15.)

As we cannot escape from our shadow, so neither can we escape from carrying a measure of influence for good or evil wherever we go. Who can tell the aggregate amount of the influence of one life? It is not the least exaggeration, but a simple fact, that many thousand persons will, by means of a single person in any rank of life, be drawn forwards or backwards, upwards or downwards, nearer to heaven or further from it. Probably in very many cases the influence will reach to tens or even hundreds of thousands. The whole kingdom of Israel was injured by the life and example of Jezebel; and the whole of the same nation was influenced for good, more or less, by the example and efforts of Jehoiada the priest. The sinner carries about with him an atmosphere of infection, and corrupts multitudes, without being the least conscious of it. Particular sins, as intemperance and profligacy, are spread with amazing rapidity from one to another. Words of evil are caught up and pollute the souls of young and old, and live on when the original speaker of them is lying

underground. A spirit of indifference to religion, a forgetfulness of God's day begins in one member of a family, and the rest copy it, and the neighbours are often influenced in the same direction.

How little does many a worldly man think of the harm he is doing, though perhaps he is not the slave of any open sin. How little does he think that his whole life is chilling, deadening, good impressions, confirming the careless in their carelessness, and placing a hindrance in the way of all who are striving hard to advance the interests of Christ's kingdom. But the influence for good of a consistent, holy, devoted life is quite as remarkable. If the influence of a wicked or a worldly man is like the shadow of the deadly upas tree, the influence of a good man is like the shadow of Peter already referred to, or like the refreshing shadow of the palm tree in the desert. Again and again I have known instances where a single action of a Christian, done without any distinct object beyond that of walking in Christ's footsteps, has been seen, and borne fruit in a wonderful way for the awakening of sinners or the edification of God's people.

A tract given away by a young Christian led another to begin tract distribution, who has since then given away many hundreds of thousands of books and tracts.

A Christian knelt down to pray in his chamber, and a young man in the same room was awakened by the sight to think of the sins of his past life, and from that hour to turn to God. Such examples and many others have come under my own notice, and may indicate the vast influence a Christian may be putting forth quite unconsciously to himself. Often when we imagine we are doing nothing, then God may be using us to do much good.

An old man in Lincolnshire, a few years ago, complained that he feared he had never done good to anyone, though he had earnestly prayed to God to make him useful. He was entreated to persevere, and assured that such a petition could not be in vain. This old man was a very regular attendant at God's house, and, though living two miles distant, was seldom absent from his place; one very rainy day he made his way to church, though without an umbrella, for he was very poor, and an ungodly farmer, who never

went to church, but spent the Sunday making up his accounts, saw this man on his way there in the morning, and said to himself, that "in such weather he would not come again in the afternoon." But he did come; and the farmer saw him again on his way. A few days after the bell was tolling, and the farmer heard that the old man was dead. It went like an arrow to his heart. He thought of the contrast between the old man and himself, and on the next Sunday morning he went to church; he was there again in the afternoon, and so week after week, and became at length a truly Christian man and a communicant. Thus, after his death, the old man had evidently done that which he had longed for, and no doubt, in many other cases, known but to God, his holy life and example had told upon those about him.

Dear reader, let me entreat you fully to recognise this truth and live in the power of it. One young lady in a school, one servant in the kitchen, one working-man in a factory, one child in a household, one Christian in a neighbourhood, in a congregation, in a town or village, may be a piece of God's leaven, leavening in

some measure the whole lump, and bringing benefit to all the rest.

How best to exert this influence, how to make the most of it, requires continual thought and prayer. Watch against all that would mar it. Dead flies spoil the precious ointment, and little inconsistencies, little acts of thoughtlessness or discourtesy, greatly hinder our power of doing good. A hasty temper, a cold, frigid manner, a pushing, self-conceited spirit, a readiness to take offence: these too often stand in the Christian's way. It is our wisdom also actively to exert all the influence which God has given us in consequence of our position in life. There are many persons who are so placed in our power that we can reach them as none others can: these we are bound very especially to care for.

Then there is another point. If in any particular quarter you find at any time that God has opened a door for you, be most earnestly desirous of making the most of it. Think once, twice, thrice,—What can I do for the benefit of these people, or to deepen and permanise this impression? Probably in that direction you may do more good in a single day, than in

another during a whole twelvemonth. And forget not this : *in proportion as you live under the shadow of Christ, your shadow will be of benefit to others.* Abide in Christ perpetually ; rejoice in the grace which He delights to give ; keep very near to Him in simple, happy, trustful confidence, and His grace will rest on you, and from you will reach those around you. Be it your frequent prayer, "Great Father, bless me, and make me a blessing, for Jesus Christ's sake." Amen.

Oh, may life be one great mission,
Christ to follow, serve, and please !
Copying His meek submission,
Sacrificing self and ease.

Zealous in each sacred duty,
May I be more Saviour-like ;
May each plant of Christian beauty
In my soul its fibres strike,—

Bearing fruit whose holy savour
Sheds its fragrance round my path ;
Seeking nothing but His favour,
Dreading nothing but His wrath.

One brief moment, Lord, may sever
All that earth can friendship call ;
But Thy friendship is for ever,—
It outlives the wreck of all.

X.

On Confessing Christ.

Is it needful openly and boldly to confess Christ ? No ! if your wish be simply to pass muster amongst others, and to have a religion that men will approve. In such a case keep free from any very plain violations of the world's standard : go to church, and be on good terms with those that are Christians, and those that are not ; never speak a word that will touch the conduct of any one ; and then perhaps all men may speak well of you, and reckon you a very good sort of Christian.

But if your wish is to be saved, to have a clear title to the heavenly inheritance, and to gain the favour and win the smile of Christ, —then I would answer emphatically, YES : a thousand times, Yes ! You must confess Christ,

you must not be ashamed of His name, you must not shrink from the reproach which it may bring. He hath said, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." And the great Apostle who loved to set forth the glory of a free justification by faith, yet has included confession as an absolutely essential condition of fellowship with Christ: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

The soldier cannot conceal the name of the sovereign, or the country, whose uniform he bears; the servant cannot refuse to acknowledge the master in whose service he is engaged; and how can the Christian desire to hide the fact of his allegiance to a heavenly King and a heavenly Master?

And this confession of Christ is very important as the test of a man's sincerity. If Christianity had only its side of privilege, how could we discover the hypocrite from the true believer? But

when persecution or reproach comes, then the leaves fall off, and the singing birds fly away, and nothing remains but the stem and the branches of the tree well-rooted and grounded in the soil. All mere profession, all mere talking is in vain, unless there be a heart to cleave fast to the Lord. And when we look at the condition of the world, and see how small a number comparatively are on the Lord's side, and how the King's enemies abound, and the standard of the adversary is everywhere unfurled, and abominable vice stalks through our streets, and infidelity and rank superstition unblushingly lift up their heads, is it a time for the followers of the Lamb to hide His righteousness within their hearts, and shut their lips, and lower their banner to please an adulterous and sinful generation?

Nor may we doubt that where the heart is filled with a Saviour's love, the lips will be touched to speak of His beauty.

I remember staying one night with a friend who had lost many of those who once had brightened his home, and now all his affections were centered upon his one remaining child. And it was his one thought, and his one theme.

Wherever the conversation began, it soon went back to the "dear boy at school." And I learnt the lesson: it is still true of earthly and of heavenly things, that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh."

If the fountain be full, the waters will flow out. If the thoughts of Christ be welling up from within, it will not be very difficult to say a word for Him. When the leper who had been healed was commanded to be silent, yet he could not refrain from telling out the goodness the Lord had shown to him. How much rather should we, who are bidden to confess His name.

It is quite true that there are great hindrances that stand in the way of this duty.

With one person there is a natural timidity, a reserve, a shyness, that finds it a trial in any way to attract notice. Both Moses and Jeremiah felt this, though called to positions of peculiar difficulty, and compelled to brave much opposition. It is a comfort to remember that the Lord knoweth our frame and He giveth more grace. And we may be assured that in this case a feeble word spoken in Christ's name will be doubly acceptable, and perhaps may be more

effectual than many words spoken by one whose disposition is less retiring.

Perhaps a still greater obstacle arises from our own felt inconsistencies, or from the false and hollow profession which some around us may make.

Do we not usually find it much easier to speak to a stranger than to those in our own homes? And is not one reason for this because they see most our defects and inconsistencies? They have marked our breaches of temper, our inconsiderate words, our petty unrealities, our yielding to some besetting infirmity, and so when we would speak to them, a still small voice within says, "Better not: your words will do no good, for you have not been careful as you should to practice what you speak." But this fear ought not to bar our way, if we honestly strive against such failings, and are praying for grace to overcome them. Those about us may see REALITY in our religion, if they cannot see PERFECTION.

Neither should we be deterred from confessing Christ because many Christians around us are very poor specimens of what Divine grace can effect.

Because Judas proved to be a hypocrite, and Peter denied Christ, was this any reason why the other disciples should refuse to confess Him and preach His Gospel?

Very true is it that even IMPROVED HUMAN NATURE, if we may use the expression, or rather the regenerate man, is very far below the standard we would desire; equally true is it that tares and wheat are mingled in the field, and will be till the Lord's appearing. But what should we learn from this?

Let us reason in this way: if others profess to be Christ's, and yet by works deny Him, then will I confess His name also, and strive that my life may confirm that which my lips confess.

If Christ be wounded in the house of His friends by their inconsistencies of word and deed, then will I watch that in my house I may adorn His doctrine in all things.

But the chief difficulty of all is the fear of man, and it is against this that we must resolutely contend. Man can do much to harm or benefit us, much for our comfort or discomfort. Besides, there is a certain amount of right

feeling in the desire to please others, or in the fear of offending them, that is apt to creep in where it ought not, and to prevent our being bold enough in confessing Christ. But it is helpful to consider that God sees this danger, and provides for it in His Word. A very large portion of the book of Psalms is intended to make us realize how much better it is to fear God than man, and that to trust in God is better than to trust in princes. Nor should we forget the appeal of God by the Prophet Isaiah : "I, even I, am He that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass ?"

Listen again to the words of Christ, reminding His disciples of His friendship, and then bidding them not fear the frown of man, but rather the displeasure of God : "I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, Fear Him which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell : yea, I say unto you, fear Him."

I have thought over this matter of confessing

Christ, and I should like to suggest to the reader a few of those ways in which it has seemed to me most important to do so.

(1) We must trust Christ with the heart before we can possibly confess His name before men. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He hath died, the Just for the unjust, bearing the huge load of a world's iniquity. And you must lay your guilt on Him by faith. You must rely upon His atonement as the one answer to every remembrance of your guilt. You must draw nigh to God with no hope but in His blood, and then believe that God looks upon you through His wounds.

Since therefore I can scarcely bear
What in myself I see ;
How vile and black must I appear,
Most Holy God, to Thee.

But since the Saviour stands between
With garments dyed in blood,
'Tis He instead of me is seen
When I approach to God.

(2) Confess Christ by letting His fair image be seen upon you. Let His name be on your

forehead. Let men see in you a true copy, however imperfect, of His kindness, His holiness, His prayerfulness, His meekness, His justice, truth, and integrity. Without this all other ways of confessing Christ will rather do harm than good.

A few words from an old writer tell of the life that each Christian must strive after. "A sanctified person is holy in a continued course: he walks with God; he applies himself to keep the commandments continually. (Ps cxix. 112.) He is not holy upon extraordinary occasions; his duties are not like a miser's feast, all at one time, nothing at another.

"He is not holy by fits and pangs; upon a rainy day reading only: good in thunder and lightning, or in a storm at sea; moved passionately with an affectionate sermon; trembling for the present, and then following bribery, like Felix. At the first coming on to profession seething hot, but after awhile lukewarm, then key-cold; slashing with Peter at the first, and shortly after flying and denying. His infirmities and falls are but for a fit, but his holiness is constant. His goodness is not like the 'morning

cloud and early dew' (Hos. vi. 4), not like the redness of blushing, but the ruddiness of complexion. His religion is not operative in company, silent in secret. He is not like water, that conforms itself to the shape of everything into which it is poured ; or like a picture, which looks every way ; his religion leaves him not at the church doors ; he retains his purity wherever he lives.

"He has a principle, like a fountain within him, that supplies him in the time of drought ; not like a splash of water, licked up with an hour's heat of the sun : the music allures him not, the furnace affrights him not from God."

(3) Confess Christ by quitting scenes of a doubtful character. If it be your great desire to walk closely with God, your feet will scarcely be found treading that perilous border-land which has been found so destructive to many souls. If there were a path on a high cliff where constantly the ground was giving way and many had lost their lives, it would not be wise to adventure there in the hope that you might pass over it in safety. If there be places from which by common consent the name of

Christ and religion is banished, if you would confess Christ, you must either stay away, or go with the express object of bearing witness there for Him in the face of all obloquy and ridicule. This was once done by a young officer. He had found a Saviour, and before he quitted such scenes for ever, he determined to go and bear a parting testimony to those with whom he had often mingled. It was a sore trial to him, but in Christ's name he went as he had purposed, and there spoke boldly for the Master whose service he had entered.

(4) Confess Christ by refusing to make any close and intimate friendship with one who is a stranger to God. I am not speaking of the necessary relations we must often have with those of our kin, or of the courtesy and kindness which Christians should manifest to all; but we must take heed not to choose as companions those who will dishonour the Name we love, or place a hindrance in our path to heaven.

More especially must young Christians refuse to take one in the closest of all bonds who does not love the Saviour. "Only in the Lord" is

the limit which God Himself has placed on such engagements.

(5) Confess Christ by taking for your standard an open Bible. Hedley Vicars thus took his place as a brave soldier of the Cross. His old companions soon discovered the ground of his consolation and the rule of his life. The Word of God was on his table and in his heart, and to this he ever turned for guidance and for strength. Follow his example. Lay aside any book whose teaching is opposed to it, unless you prayerfully read it for some special object, that you may the better be able to meet the difficulties of others. Honour the Word of God. It will stand for ever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this Word shall not pass away.

(6) Hold fast by truths that for a season may be unpopular. The current of popular opinion just now runs very strong in directions that carry men far away from plain Gospel teaching. Some are carried away by a view of material organization, that denies the supernatural and forbids God to hear the prayers of His children. Others are drawn in by services of a very extreme character, and by teaching that savours

more of the Romish than the English Church. But we must hold fast by the old truths and determine still to walk in the old ways. The supreme importance of heart religion, the free justification of a sinner by faith, the authority of Holy Scripture as the final appeal, the efficacy of believing prayer, the peril of idolatry wherever it is found,—such truths as these we must never let go.

(7) We must frequent regularly Christian ordinances. We ought not only to go to Church or the Lord's Supper, that we may obtain help and strength, but we ought to go also that we may honour the Lord who hath appointed them. We there confess His name. In the sight of a world that denies Christ, we profess our faith in Him, and that our whole trust is in His finished work. We openly proclaim that we believe in His dying love and in His glorious resurrection, and that we look for Him to come hereafter as Judge of quick and dead.

(8) We may sometimes confess Christ by dead, dumb, silence. A question is put to you with an oath, or with some expression or word that is distinctly profane. What should you do?

Perhaps the very best thing is to answer not a word. Say nothing. Press your lips together and be as silent as a statue. This may awaken a thought sometimes, and may do more good than many words.

(9) Confess Christ by kind, persuasive words, to draw those about you to Christ. There are very many around us on all sides that have a longing for something better than they possess, and if the word be only spoken in a tender, gentle spirit, they will gladly listen.

Strive to feel deeply for those who are yet without Christ, and then out of a compassionate heart tell of His love.

In the railway train, in the friendly walk, when some business matter has been settled, when you have a quiet moment with a servant, tell of Jesus and His kindness to yourself, and how ready He is to save all who turn to Him.

In the year 1864, a Christian in South India, made a resolution that he would never let a day pass without speaking to at least two persons about their eternal interests. In the year 1871 he was able to write to a friend that he believed that resolution had been faithfully kept, and

that for above seven years no day had passed without his having been able in some way thus to confess Christ. Is not here an example for Christians in our own country?

(10) Confess Christ sometimes by a bold and fearless step. It was a bold step when Christ took the scourge and drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple; and though we are not, as He did, to act as judges, yet there are special times when we ought to act as boldly and fearlessly.

A Missionary in India heard one morning a fearful oath from the tent of an officer. Caution said, "You have nothing to do with it: it will bring you into trouble to say anything;" but faith and courage said, "Go and reprove that sin." After a severe mental struggle he went to the tent and spoke to the officer. He did it wisely, yet faithfully, and before he left he received the thanks of the officer to whom he had spoken. Within a few weeks he heard of his death, and he had some ground for hoping that the message he had given had not been lost.

Another fact. I have read of four young

men who were living wicked, profligate lives. One of them heard God's message, and then went and said to his companions, "I tell you what it is: I think if we go on living as we are living now, we shall come to a very awful end." His companions laughed, but they thought of it, and two of these men ended by becoming ministers of Christ. Be ready, when occasion calls for it, to take up your cross in this way.

Speak out! If you are anxious and distressed about your soul, and can find no peace, go and ask counsel of Christ's minister. If you feel you have been doing wrong in any matter, go and openly confess it. If you see any glaring evil, take your stand against it, and who knows but you may be able to check it?

(11) Confess Christ by the pen and by the press. Write letters to those whom you may be able to influence. Carefully examine the publications, tracts, and books, small and great, which you may think most likely to do good, and then scatter, as good seed, those you value most, and perhaps, in numberless homes, you may be speaking in this way words that may do infinite good.

It is impossible to over-estimate the vast influence of the press, and in every way that it is available let us employ it in Christ's service. A lady gave me, a short time ago, a £5 note to spend in this way; and such an amount, or far less, may bring a message for Christ into thousands of homes.

And let me add, how blessed will be the effect, if in these, or any other ways, you truly confess Christ.

I would imagine a young reader of these pages, and you begin your Christian course with a humble determination to speak for Christ and to win others for Him. You search out means, day after day, in a quiet prayerful way, to do good. You drop a word here and a word there. You lend a book to a friend, you give a tract to a stranger, you utter a kindly warning against a sin you witness; you now and then have to take a more decided step, and perhaps risk the favour of some whom you love: and withal men see that it is a reality with you, because your daily walk and temper and conversation is in accordance with your words and efforts.

What will be the sure result? I speak not of

the glorious crown which the Lord will give you at His appearing, but think of the numbers to whom you may prove a blessing. If God should spare your life for a few years, the blessing probably may reach thousands, or tens of thousands. A sinner brought back to God, a falling one upheld, a backslider restored, a mourner comforted, a Christian edified; thus, one by one, will a goodly host be found at last to whom in Christ's name you have ministered the word of life. And that you may be able thus to confess Christ, remember that it is only in His strength that you can do so. Let your eye be fixed on Him. Look to Him for the ever-present grace and help of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Thus shall your heart be strengthened and your lips be touched, and you shall be enabled without fear to witness for Christ.

XI.

The Feast of Blessing and the Grace of the Comforter.

IT is of great moment for Christians ever to bear in mind that in every part of the Christian life the Holy Ghost is the great agent and worker in the soul. It is the office of the Spirit to convince of sin, to awake sleeping, careless ones, to enlighten the eyes of the understanding, to see the glory of Christ, to renew, to teach, to sanctify and to perfect believers in the likeness of the Son of God. And this is true with respect to all ordinances. Divine worship in the sanctuary, baptism, confirmation, the Lord's Supper,—all are profitable in proportion to the grace of the Holy Spirit, granted in answer to fervent and believing prayer.

The ordinances of Christ are golden pitchers,

but without the living water they bring no refreshment to the soul. Let us think of this with reference to that ordinance which Christ appointed on the eve of His death for the comfort and strengthening of His people in all ages.

We must remember that *all due preparation* for partaking of the Lord's Supper is the fruit of the operation of the Divine Spirit. There may be a formal preparation for a few days previously, by repetition of certain prayers; but unless the Holy Spirit touch the heart, there can be no real profit. Three things are especially needful, as pointed out in our Church service,—repentance, faith, and charity. But whence cometh this threefold cord of Christian grace?

Whence, but from the Holy Ghost, cometh the spirit of true penitence, the broken heart, the humbling sense of our unworthiness and our deficiencies, the godly sorrow that mourns for having crucified the Lord? Yes, it is His work to break up the fallow ground of our hard and strong hearts, to bring us in lowliness and contrition to His footstool, there to confess our manifold iniquities.

Whence, too, but from the same Spirit cometh the faith, the trust, that looks up for mercy and salvation to our crucified and risen Saviour? Whence also cometh that heaven-born charity that seeketh not her own, that envieth not, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things? Surely all these are wrought by this one and self-same Spirit, whose fruit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Dear reader, carry this thought with you as a practical suggestion, before next you draw near to the Lord's table. Plead with God in Christ's name for the Comforter very especially to prepare your heart. Look for the Spirit to awaken within you self-renunciation, lowly trust, and true charity.

But let us pass on to the work of the Holy Spirit, making the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper effectual for the purpose of its institution. Perhaps if we look at it in three lights, each advancing a step beyond the former, we may see the blessings which Christ purposed, and in each of them the need we have for the grace of the Spirit.

We are to regard this Sacrament as appointed to awaken remembrance. It was given "that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained for us." The remembrance of past events may be of two kinds. It may be such as to awaken no emotion, no joy, no sorrow, nor even to cause any lively interest. Such is the storing up in the memory certain facts or dates in our school-days, which may be useful as landmarks in the study of history or science. But remembrance may be of a very different character. It may stir the soul to its depths. It may awaken the feeling of anger or remorse, of revenge or of grief. Such was the case when an Eastern Monarch bade a servant stand behind his chair and say, "Sire, remember the Athenians:" desiring thus to kindle afresh his determination to avenge the wrong they had done him. Such is the feeling of many a Frenchman in looking back to the conflict between his country and Germany. Such was the remembrance of Peter as he thought of his

sin in denying his Lord. On the other hand, the remembrance may arouse the intensest feeling of joy, or gratitude, or hope, or love.

You may remember some act of self-sacrifice on the part of a friend, which saved your life or averted some great calamity. You may think of a parent now lying at rest in a quiet grave; and perchance the recollection of a mother's hand placed on your head, or of her prayers or kindness, may have been a stay in many an hour of sorrow or temptation.

Now of this latter kind, awakening the very deepest feeling, is the remembrance which Christ would have us cherish of Himself and His dying love. It is not a mere recollection,—something cold as starlight or moonlight, something passing through the chambers of the memory and leaving no impression behind,—but a remembrance that has an effectual operation, that stirs up deep and lasting emotion, that kindles sorrow for sin, repentance, lively gratitude and hope and confidence, that leads to active effort in Christ's service. It is such a remembrance as the Apostle speaks of when he declares that our salvation is bound up with the exercise of it.

"I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you . . . by which also ye are saved *if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*"

Now whence can arise such lively remembrance as this? How can such be kindled afresh within us as we draw near to the Table of our Lord? How can we avoid the inroads of that insidious formalism, which, like the dead flies which spoil the precious ointment, is apt to creep in and spoil our holiest services? Surely it must be the presence of the Holy Spirit. He who appointed this feast to be the great act of remembrance, also promised the Comforter as the Remembrancer of His Church. (John xiv. 26.) "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

It is thus the Spirit of truth which testifies of Jesus to the soul, bringing back to the soul, in living, effectual remembrance, all the mercy and love of the Redeemer, all that He has said and all that He has done for us, and especially the

marvellous loving-kindness of the cross, and all the benefits which thus He hath purchased for us.

This lively remembrance of Christ is very beautifully expressed in a hymn written by the first Hindoo convert in Burmah, and translated into English :—

O thou, my soul, forget no more
The Friend who all thy sorrows bore :
Let every idol be forgot,
But Him, my soul, forget thou not.
Renounce thy works and ways with grief,
And fly to this Divine relief :
Nor Him forget who left His throne
And for thy life gave up His own.
Eternal truth and mercy shine
In Him, and He Himself is Thine :
And canst thou then, with sin beset,
Such charms, such matchless charms forget ?
Oh no ! Till life itself depart
His name shall cheer and warm my heart ;
And lisping this, from earth I'll rise
And join the chorus of the skies !

But we take another step. The Lord's Supper is not only a remembrance of Christ and His precious death, but it is *supping with Christ*. Remembrance is of one absent ; but we sit down to sup with one who is present, near at hand, and making himself known to us by word and

deed. We recall the scene at Emmaus. The two disciples meet with the Lord, though at first unknown to them. He converses with them. At their request He goes in and sits down with them at their evening meal. And so their hearts burn within them as they hearken to His loving words.

It is thus with Christ and His people now. Though in His glorified body He is exalted to the right hand of the glory of God, yet spiritually, He is very nigh to His own. "The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me." "If any man keep my sayings . . . I will manifest myself to him." In Jewish families, I have read that at certain ordinances a chair is placed for the Prophet Elijah. They believe, that though invisible, he is present with them. This is really true of Christ. A young friend was speaking of her joy in Christ, and said that she could rest happily at night "because she felt Jesus *was close by*." I was struck with the expression, because it is so true. He is "*close by*" every one of His people. This is very especially true at such an ordinance as we refer to. It is indeed a Holy Communion,—a Holy Communion

between Christ and His people, and also between Christians one with the other.

But how can this fellowship and communion with Christ be realized ? It is not to be obtained by any mere general considerations that the Lord is everywhere present ; nor is it by palming upon our minds strange theories of some miraculous presence through the consecrating words of the priest ; or that one part of the Church is more holy than another, and that He dwells there as He doth not elsewhere.

Nay, it is in the fellowship of the Spirit that we can realize fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Ghost making that a reality to the soul which would otherwise be a truth held only by mere intellectual conviction. It is when the Comforter dwelleth in us that we can rejoice in the fulfilment of the promise, that the Father and Son come to us and make their abode with us.

And then, as we draw near and kneel down together at that solemn hour, if we have sought the special aid of the Spirit, we may look for it that He will enable us to see and feel a Saviour in the midst of us, revealing His everlasting

love and filling the heart with sweet and holy joy.

But we go one step further. Not only is there a remembrance of Christ, but supping with Christ; not only a supping with Christ, but a feeding on Christ.

In an ordinary feast we sit down with a friend and partake of the refreshment provided. But in this feast, not only do we sit down with Christ, but He gives Himself to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that Holy Sacrament. The inward part or thing signified in the Lord's Supper is the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

But we inquire how is this? What is this partaking of the body and blood of Christ? In the Romish Church we are taught that it is by the elements being changed by the word of the priest. In a letter I once had from a priest of that Church, he wrote: "I receive Christ on my tongue, in my mouth, and thus into my breast."

The teaching of our Church is the very opposite to this. The change of elements cannot be proved by holy writ, it overthroweth

the nature of a sacrament and hath given occasion to many superstitions. (See Art. xxviii.) The benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, for then we *spiritually* eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood. But what is meant by *spiritually* eating Christ's flesh? Does it mean that in some spiritual, supernatural way, the bread conveys with it the flesh of Christ to my soul? Or does it mean that all true feeding on Christ is in the region of the inner spirit? Again, I ask this question of our Church. I go to the words with which the bread is given to each communicant. "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thine heart by faith with thanksgiving." Look carefully at this language. "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, *which was given for thee.*" The body of Christ, which preserves the soul, is the body which more than eighteen centuries ago was given for us, to suffer on the cross.

Then it is said, "Take and eat this in re-

membrance of that crucified body,"—this bread is to put you in mind of the body which was nailed to the cross for you,—“and feed on Him :” not feed on this bread, but “feed on Him” who died,—“in thine heart :” not by thy mouth, —“by faith :” not by any bodily reception,—“by faith with thanksgiving.”

Whereas many now endeavour to confound the body which was crucified with the bread which is eaten, and the faith which really receives Christ with the partaking of the elements, it is scarcely possible to find any language which more distinctly shows the difference between them, than these words in our service.

But where is there the least shadow of foundation in Holy Scripture for teaching that the bread and wine is in any way changed, except in its use and purpose? It is said that our Lord's words, “This is my body,” “This is my blood,” settle the question, and that we must simply take them as they stand and then leave it. But words are only the signs of the inward meaning of the person who utters them; and must we not endeavour to lay hold on this, rather than rest in the words themselves? Is

it not a fact that our Lord's teaching, from first to last, was ever by figure and parable, an earthly type or shadow, thus leading on His disciples to inquiry and thought? Did not those who took the simple, surface meaning of such parabolic expressions, always err? If you take any other portion of the New Testament, and treat such like sayings in the same way, do you not reduce them to a palpable absurdity? Why then take Christ's word in this instance and interpret it in a wholly different way? Look how men erred by taking Christ's words literally. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" "Ye must be born again;" "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;" "Beware of the leaven of Herod;" "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst again;" "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one;" "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Everyone of these expressions was taken in its literal meaning, and *it proved to be a mistaken view* of our Lord's intention in uttering it.

Look again at numbers more of similar expressions, which must be taken figuratively, or with considerable variations from their surface meaning: "Let the dead bury their dead;" "I will make you fishers of men;" "If thine eye offend thee pluck it out;" "If any man come after Me, and hate not father," etc.; "The good seed are the children of the kingdom;" "The tares are the children of the wicked one;" "The King shall set the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left." Such expressions abound everywhere in the Gospel, and can only be understood by looking underneath for the thought which explains them. Study the whole of the New Testament. See how the element of figure and emblem and parable abounds in every page. And then, I believe, you will have no doubt whatever as to the meaning of our Lord's words. They will shine out as clear as sunlight.

The Saviour, on the night before His sufferings, takes into His hand the bread, and breaks it, and gives it to each one, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." As if He

would say, "See here, in type and figure, my sacred body, Now, you see it whole, active, living: but as I break this bread before your eyes, so shall you shortly see this body of mine, bruised, wounded, torn, broken. The nails shall tears these hands and feet; the cruel scourge shall lacerate this form; the spear shall pierce this side. And it is all for you. Others may give you other gifts, but I give you myself, my body, to bleed and die for your salvation. And whensoever you eat this bread, think of my dying love, and nourish your souls by the remembrance of all that I have suffered for you." So too was it when our Lord gave the cup: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." As if He would say, "You know how in olden times the blood was perpetually shed. Moses took the blood of beasts and sprinkled both the book and the people. Aaron went into the holy place every year with the blood of others. But all this could never save you, for the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. But now I make a new covenant with you. I make a covenant of gifts and

promises. I offer you complete and free forgiveness. And this cup, this wine, tells you of that precious blood which seals that covenant, and which to-morrow shall be shed for the remission of sins, and shall henceforth be a stream of salvation for the cleansing of all believing souls."

Such, I believe, was the lesson Christ intended to teach. He desired them to see, as before their eyes, that great work which should bring salvation to His Church. And then He would have them again and again remember it for their everlasting comfort. We see, then, that it is by no change in the elements that we feed on Christ. It is by the heart partaking in faith of Christ and all the benefits of His death. The soul can only feed on truth, and it is the truth as it is in Jesus that really strengthens and nourishes. Ignorance is the soul's famine; error is the soul's poison; truth is the soul's true food and support.

Hence we see again how it is the work of the Spirit which brings the true comfort and profit of this sacrament. Our Lord has said: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." And again, "As the Father hath sent

Me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth Me, he shall live by Me." And this spiritual feeding on Christ crucified, through the knowledge of His truth, brings unspeakable benefit. There is a refreshment to the weary and heavy laden; there is a strengthening of the weak; there is a satisfaction of the longing soul which nothing else can give. But it is all the work of the Holy Spirit. We may partake of the bread, but it is the Spirit that enables us to feed on Christ by faith; we may drink of the wine, but it is the Spirit alone that satisfies the thirsty spirit with a real rest of conscience in the blood of the cross. It is the Spirit which gives a lasting consolation in those views of Christ's death which uphold and strengthen the Christian pilgrim both in life and in death. It is thus we see the fathomless well of love in His heart; for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is thus we see the high dignity to which those rise who are washed in that blood; for He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and our Father.

It is thus we are upheld in daily toil and suffering in His service; for we are "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," as we learn yet more and more "of the height and depth and breadth and length of the love of Christ" in His atoning death.

It is thus we can face without fear the last enemy; for the Spirit bears witness to the soul that Christ is near, and His presence is everlasting life.

Dear reader, I would ask you to carry away two lessons from our consideration of this subject. Never disregard our Lord's command, and refuse His loving invitation to draw near to His table. Remember that in doing so you dishonour the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You dishonour Christ; for you disobey His command, and turn away from an ordinance which He has appointed for your spiritual welfare. If it was not needful for you, He would not have appointed it; but He who knows all your temptations and infirmities, has given it as an hour of sweet and holy retirement, and has promised there to meet with you and bless you with His presence and love. Surely it is the part of

obedience, as well as of true affection, to value so precious a means of grace. But in refusing to come, you dishonour the Father also; for he who honoureth not the Son, "honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." And so likewise you grieve and dishonour the good Spirit of God; for He delights to testify of Jesus, and He waits to sanctify this feast of remembrance by His own grace and power. He is ready there to call to your remembrance the Saviour's love, to quicken your apprehension of His nearness to you, to nourish your soul with believing views of His work.

Let it therefore be reckoned your high privilege, as well as your bounden duty, thus to manifest your love to your Divine Master. Never turn away from His table when you can avoid it; neither come in a cold and formal spirit. Draw near with an earnest longing for clearer light, for more fervent love, and more entire devotedness to Christ and His work.

Then, one other lesson. Ever remember where the grace of this Holy Sacrament is to be looked for. Never confound two things: *grace in the Sacrament and grace in the elements.* The

one is as false and unscriptural as the other is undoubtedly true. The former we must clearly maintain, the latter as distinctly deny.

Be sure there can be no feeding on Christ except in the heart: none in the heart but by faith; and no exercise of living, soul-reviving, soul-strengthening faith, but by the grace of the Holy Ghost. Hence let us draw near in the power of the Spirit. Let us humbly ask and earnestly expect the Spirit to be with us whenever we thus meet and desire to remember Christ. Let us turn our thoughts from the elements of which we partake, to those great realities to which they point us. Let us look back to Christ as crucified on the cross for us; let us look upward to Him as now exalted to the right hand of God, and believe that He is indeed present in the midst of us to bless; let us look forward to His glorious appearing, when all true communicants shall meet at His marriage feast; and let us look, meanwhile, for His Spirit to bring Him to us yet nearer and closer day by day, and thus to enable us to rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

XII.

On Companions and Books.

No truth is more important for the young Christian to remember, than that we become like those with whom we associate : we gain more and more resemblance to those with whom we are intimate : we insensibly catch their spirit and their tone of mind. It is written, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed ;" "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Rehoboam takes counsel with the young men, and accepting their advice, he loses a large part of his kingdom. Jehosaphat makes an alliance with King Ahab ; disaster and defeat follow, and God sends him the solemn reproof : "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord ?" On the other hand, Ruth joins herself

to Naomi and the people of God, and gains a rich blessing : Nathanael joins company with Philip, and finds a Saviour. The lesson is plain. Be careful in the choice of friends : enter not into the path of the wicked. As you have opportunity, make companions of such as love and fear God. It was the spirit of the man after God's own heart.

“ I hate the work of them that turn aside . . . I will not know a wicked person. . . Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” (Ps. ci. 3, 4, 6.) “ Depart from me, ye evil-doers : I will keep the commandments of my God . . . I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts.” (Ps. cxix. 115, 63.) But side by side with this lesson we may learn another. We may well apply this truth to the books we should read. Where do we find the wisest thoughts of the wisest men ? Where do we find the cream of that intellectual or spiritual power which a man may possess ? Is it not in their writings ? Take off your shelf the work of some good man who lived a century ago, and do

you not at once make him your companion, though he may long have been slumbering in the grave? Take up a thoughtful magazine, and read an article written by some servant of Christ who may be living hundreds of miles distant, and whose face you never expect to see in the flesh, and is he not in some sense numbered amongst the friends you value?

You may not often be able to find as your daily friend and counsellor, one as true and wise and helpful as you would desire; but can you not in this way attain in some measure your object? Can you not find always, if you search for it, a book that will teach you and strengthen your hands?

And there is another advantage in these companions. We can have their society when we will. There are friends who come and talk with us when we would rather be alone, or when we feel we ought to be about our work; and at other times we desire their presence, but they are far away. But we can always choose our time for conversing with our friend on the shelf. The time in which we have his company need not either be too long or too short. Let us

consider then what sort of companions it is well to choose, and then apply this to the books we read.

First of all, we may be sure of this,—that it is wise to choose as companions such only as are of pure mind, sound principle, and whose conversation will not harm those who listen to it.

Some companions are very clever, very fascinating, sparkling with wit and life, and even kindliness of nature it may be, and yet for all this their influence is dead against all right feeling and Christian holiness. It is hard to resist their advances, or to refuse an invitation from them, and yet all the while a voice within tells us it is dangerous to be with them: their influence is all in the wrong direction; it is away from purity, from the love of God, from the path of faithful obedience to the Divine will. Their bands may be silken, but they are the bands of Delilah, for they bind the soul to its ruin; their voice may be sweet, but it is the voice of the Syren that would draw you to the fatal isle, where escape is well-nigh impossible.

Dear reader, is this a danger to which you are exposed? Have you a friend who makes light

of Spiritual things, and whose words leave many a taint of evil on your soul? What ought you to do? Ought you most to regard Christ, or your friend? If you desire to be loyal to the Great Captain of your salvation, take a bold stand. Don't let things insensibly take their course, till one by one you give up your own decided convictions. Act courteously, act kindly and considerately, but act firmly.

Speak out boldly when anything is spoken to the dishonour of Christ's name. Write a letter to your friend, and say how much you have been pained, and that you dare not be friends with one who speaks against the Name you love. Earnestly plead with your friend to turn at once to the Lord, and then you will rejoice to help each other on the way to Zion: never mind the pain it may give you to write the letter, or to speak the faithful word; with Christ by your side, you are stronger than any ungodly companion who may be much older or more clever than yourself. Perhaps your courage and faithfulness may win a soul for Christ; perhaps it may break the link, and make your friend no longer care for your society. In either case it

will do you good and glorify God, and you will have a fresh testimony in your own heart as to the reality of your faith in Christ.

That which is true of companions, is equally so of books. Much that is written is very amusing, very attractive, but it is very dangerous. It may please the imagination, but it pollutes and enervates the mind; it tends to destroy not only vital religion, but even common morality; it glosses over the most deadly vices with fair names, and palliates social evils that utterly ruin the peace of families, and debase and corrupt nations.

I have often thought of the dream of John Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, which he tells us he had in the cloister of Arbogasta, before he put forth his discovery to the world. He thought an angel of light appeared to him and spake thus: "John Gutenberg, thou hast made thy name immortal, but think thee at what a price! Think well what thou art surely doing. The ungodly are many more than the good: thy work will but multiply their blasphemies and lies. Thou hast uncovered the

bottomless pit: a swarm of seducing spirits shall henceforth come out like the brood of Abaddon, and turn earth into a hell! Oh, think of millions of souls corrupted by thine achievement: the poison of fiends distilled into the souls of boys and girls, making them old in the experience of sin! See that mother weeping over her depraved son, and that grey-haired father hiding his face from his daughter's shame. Destroy thy press, for it shall be the pander of blasphemy and lust. Destroy it, and forget it. Forbear, by multiplying the resources of the wicked, to make thyself, through all ages, partaker of their crimes."

Gutenberg was about to destroy his invention, but he reflected that the gifts of God, though perilous, are never bad, and that he might be helping the intellect and wisdom which God had given to man to gain fresh help and opportunity for good. So he proceeded with his work, and the first book that went forth from his press was a portion of the Holy Scriptures.

But, alas, the dream has come too true! Tens of thousands of publications, small and great, are issuing from the press which spread the con-

tagion of evil on every side. Many a school boy has lost irretrievably the tone and purity of his mind by such reading; many a girl has secretly read such a book, and it has left its stain on her for life,—her dress may be fair and white, but the spot on the inner robe of purity abides.

A great responsibility rests upon parents with respect to this matter. You should be very careful never to let poison be so exposed in your house that by any chance your children would be likely to touch it. But is there not worse poison than that which endangers life? And ought you not to take heed that no such books are in your home as may prove likely to injure the souls of your children.

And if, dear reader, you should have formed the habit of reading such light and injurious books or publications, is it not wise at once to cast them aside? It may be difficult for you at first to substitute other reading, but in the end you will be abundantly recompensed for the effort, in the real profit and solid enjoyment afforded by the perusal of works of a higher character.

If such books as I have referred to are in your house, follow the example of the Ephesians. They burnt their bad books, though the price of them was fifty thousand pieces of silver.

(2) A good companion is one of a thoughtful spirit, and who has a mind well stored with useful information. Such a friend as this is invaluable. If you desire to think out matters of importance that occur around you, or subjects that you feel a difficulty in comprehending, or if you know that you have but stood on the shore of the great ocean of truth, and yet would fain learn something more, you will find half an hour's talk with such a one will often help you. It may set a stone rolling that may be long before it rest; it may suggest a new view of some truth that may give you matter for thought for weeks or years; it may give you a key to unlock some difficult problem which has often perplexed you.

It is the same with the perusal of books containing real thought, or giving you reliable information. Such books are worth reading, and bring lasting benefit. They help you in any station of life; they fit you for more use-

fulness in your own home, and in the Church of God; they win for you the friendship of those who find you can help them as they can help you; they keep the mind fresh and alive, and prevent your being engrossed with little petty cares and duties which would otherwise lower the whole tone of your mind. It is a good thing to cultivate a taste for this kind of reading: the tension of mind, which it requires, is very wholesome discipline. Many an hour is wasted over books of fiction, or over every item in the daily newspaper, which might be far better spent. If men lived upon some light delicacies, and never took solid meat or good household bread, what health could they expect to enjoy? And if your reading be merely of a desultory character, what mental or intellectual power can you look for?

(3) The best companion is one who is a lover of God and His truth. A Christian friend is worth gold; yea, is a precious diamond. If he have faults, remember you have many also, and bear with them for the grace that is in Him. "A diamond with a flaw is better than a pebble without one."

How much David was strengthened by the friendship of Jonathan ; and we read that when in the days of Malachi, they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, the Lord hearkened and heard it.

The two friends on the road to Emmaus were speaking together of their Master, when He joined Himself to them and made their hearts burn within them. Such Christian friendship is one of the sweetest privileges a follower of Christ can enjoy on earth, and should be cultivated with the utmost care.

And here we discover the sort of reading that is of all the most desirable. We all want help heavenward. Around us we find temptations and snares which turn our feet aside from the narrow path : business, and the example of those we mingle with in society, and our own treacherous hearts,—all these have a downward tendency ; but God provides many aids to our faith, and amongst them Christian books have an important place. Often the reading of some such book has been the turning-point for good in the life of a young person. We often hear of the genealogies of good men, but

it is interesting to trace the genealogy of a good book.

Sibbe's "Bruised Reed" was the means used of God for the conversion of Richard Baxter; Richard Baxter wrote "The Saint's Rest," the reading of which led to the conversion of Dr. Doddridge; Dr. Doddridge wrote "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," which became a blessing to William Wilberforce; William Wilberforce wrote "The Practical View of Christianity," which touched the heart of Legh Richmond; Legh Richmond wrote "The Annals of the Poor," which has been one of the most useful books ever written for the young. Hence we see how a good book has become, not only an instrument of good to many readers, but a parent of successive works, which in succeeding generations have brought blessing to large numbers of readers. I may mention also an interesting fact which has lately come to my knowledge, and for which I thank Him who can use the simplest agencies and the weakest instruments for His own glory and the good of souls.

Some twelve years ago, a young Hindoo of

twelve years of age left a village in Tinnevelly, near Palamcottah, and went to seek a living in Ceylon. As his prospects were not very promising, he went about to several places, and at last was inveigled by a party, who carried him off to Penang, in China, and bound him down to servitude for two years. While there, he accidentally saw a little book, "Not Your Own," translated into Tamil by the Rev. E. Sargent, and purchased it for a couple of annas (3d.), read it, and by the Holy Spirit he was brought to the Lord Jesus and became His faithful child. He has now gone back to his native village, and the native pastor there has been greatly rejoiced at the prayerful and godly example he is setting before all. And if, sometimes, as in this instance, we see God using a little book to awaken and convert a soul to Himself, still more frequently does He use a similar instrumentality in guiding those that are seeking Him, and in strengthening and confirming weak believers in the faith. About twenty-seven years ago, a young friend gave me a copy of "Come to Jesus," and in the plain and Scriptural way in which Christ is set forth as

the only hope of the sinner, I found exceeding help in dispelling doubt and fear.

In the biographies of earnest Christians, especially of such as have worked hard in the mission field, or in spheres of great difficulty at home, we often have an agency of the first importance in raising up fresh workers in the Lord's harvest field. The lives of Brainerd, Henry Martyn, and in later years, the lives of noble Duncan Matheson, and the story of the martyr Church of Madagascar, have been eminently useful in quickening the zeal of Christians in the work of the Lord. What a debt of gratitude also does many an invalid owe to books which take the place of the preached Gospel, and unfold in the sick chamber the unsearchable riches of Christ.

But never should any book, however excellent, take the place of the Word itself, or occupy the time that ought to be given to its study. All other books of Christian teaching are only valuable as they bring you back to the fountain-head.

Make the Book of God your chiefest and most intimate companion. Become well acquainted

with every portion of this rich treasury of wisdom and consolation : it will be your safeguard against error on the right hand and on the left. When you enter fully into its spirit, and can see its various doctrines as revealed throughout its pages, you will instinctively shrink from teaching that undermines or denies them. It will be your safeguard against infidelity, in whatever shape it may meet you. A Bible loved, and well studied, shines, like the sun, by its own light ; the comfort and help which it affords is an evidence of its Divine origin which cannot be gainsaid. And, remember, that when all other reading has lost its attraction, when heartbreaking sorrow, or approaching death, shall cast into the shade all mere human knowledge, this bright candle of the Lord shall illumine the darkness, and give a foretaste of the joy of that home of which the Lord Himself is the everlasting light.

One word more. Be not selfish in the enjoyment of this privilege of reading. Think of others ; think of those who are too poor to obtain this help ; think of hospitals, parish-unions, gaols, and the houses of the needy.

Give, or lend books or periodicals that may be likely to do good. Think also of those in the same station of life as yourself. Lend from your own library, from time to time, a book to a sick neighbour, or to one whose mind may be open to serious impressions. Let Christmas, New Year, Birthday, or Marriage presents, take the shape of a really valuable book. Think especially of the young. Much that is very dangerous is cast in their way: do your best to counteract this by something that will help them. What a large number of young persons are indebted to the "Pathway of Safety," given at confirmation, for great assistance in their after course; and how many a young woman has found Richmond's "Annals of the Poor," a light to guide her to the Saviour.

Sow diligently in this way the good seed, and pray that the Spirit of God may water it with the dew of His blessing. "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days."

A few books suggested, that may be useful to young Christians, to assist them in the know-

ledge of Scripture, to quicken faith and zeal, and to give comfort in days of sorrow :—

The Land and the Book, by Dr. Thomson.

Christ our Example, by Caroline Fry.

Conybear and Howson on St. Paul.

Canon Liddon's Divinity of Christ.

Canon Norris's Key to the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles.
Benedicite.

Canon Ryle's Exposition of the Gospels.

„ Leaders of the Last Century.

„ Home Truths.

Day by Day, Not your Own, Safe and Happy, Zionward,
The Home of Bethany, by Rev. G. Everard.

Bishop Hall's, Contemplations.

The Church and the Churches, by the Dean of Ripon.

Religion in Daily Life, by Rev. E. Garbett.

The Shepherd of Bethlehem, Exiles of Babylon, Idols of
the Heart, and other works, by A. L. O. E.

Thoughts on the Christian Life, Studies in the Psalms, by
Hetty Bowman.

The Shadow and the Substance, Heavenly Places, Forgiveness,
Life, and Glory, etc., by Stevenson Blackwood.

Ourselves, and other works, by Brownlow North.

Haldane on the Romans.

The Presence of Christ, by Rev. A. W. Thorold.

The Pathway of Peace, by Whittemore.

Light and Truth, by Bonar.

Life of Rev. R. C. Dallas.

Life of Duncan Matheson.

Life of Rev. Samuel Marsden.

Life of Bishop Patteson.

Life of Mrs. Hinderer.

Life of Captain Hammond.

The Christian Life, The Pathway of Safety, and other works, by Bishop Oxenden.

Sermons, by Rev. W. Arnot.

Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson.

Afric's Mountain Valley.

Stranger than Fiction.

Sunrise in the Tropics.

Under the Southern Cross.

Recollections of an Indian Missionary. Weitbrecht.

Diary of Kitty Trevelyán, Diary of the Schonberg Cotta Family, and other works by the same authoress.

Poems by Charlotte Elliott.

Ezekiel, and other poems.

St. Paul at Rome, and other works, by Macduff.

Blind Bartimæus, by Professor Hage.

D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation.

Life in the Ghetto.

Life of Martin Luther, Ragged Life in Egypt, by Miss Whately.

Broad Shadows on Life's Pathway.

Ministering Children.

The Ministry of Song, Little Bruey, by Miss Havergal.

Life of Marguerite d' Angouleme, by Miss Freer.

The Lord's Prayer, by Adolphe Saphir.

Copsley Annals.

One Thing. Published by Seely.

Sunday Echoes in Week-day Hours. (Four Series.) By
Mrs. Brock.

Various volumes of Sermons, by Rev. C. J. Vaughan, M.A.

The "I wills" of the Psalmist, The "I wills" of Christ,
Pivot Words of Scripture, by Rev. P. B. Power.

Memorials of Rev. W. B. Mackenzie.

The Intermediate State, by the late Dean Alford.

Memoirs of M'Cheyne.

The Martyr Church of Madagascar, Voices of the Valley,
by Rev. F. Whitfield.

And other books.

The Catalogues of "The Pure Literature Society," "The Religious Tract Society," "The Christian Book Society," "The Sunday-school Institute," are very useful in giving the names of various books likely to be helpful.

XIII.

Faithful unto Death.

I ALWAYS connect these words with the life and death of a young clergyman. I knew him first at a public school in the north of England. His reverent manner during prayer, his consistent walk, and his whole demeanour told of a principle actuating him, which I fear is not very common amongst schoolboys. In fact, he had been a follower of Christ from very early years. When about six years old, a lady had instructed him in the knowledge of the Saviour, and the good seed had found a little plot of prepared ground. From her lips he learned the truth which led him, even then, to trust and follow Christ.

When I went up to the University of Cambridge, he was one of the first I met in

the grounds of St. John's College. He was with me as a fellow-student for about two years, and it was evident to all of us that to him life was devoted to the Master's service. He was still the same as I had known him at school years before, but more full of holy joy, more bold in confessing Christ, and more zealous in winning souls. Many a faithful testimony for Christ did he bear, both to the undergraduates and the college servants, and his bright, happy look, commended the truth which he so much loved. When I entered upon my present charge, at St. Mark's, Wolverhampton, I was again reminded of John Goodier, though in a very different way. Behind the pulpit is a memorial stone bearing his name upon it, and also the words at the heading of this chapter, from Rev. ii. 10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." For ten weeks only had he been in Holy Orders, having had a title from my predecessor, and in the course of his parochial ministrations he had visited a woman laid low with an infectious disease. He caught the disease, and in a few days fell asleep in Jesus. It was remarkable, that on the

following Sunday evening he had purposed preaching from the words I have quoted, but his life and early death were a better sermon than any he could have delivered ; and now they remain on the walls of our church, bidding us too be faithful to our Lord.

In the Christian life, nothing is more essential than faithfulness. It is that which stands foremost and distinguishes the true man from the false. Without it all other apparent signs of grace are but a sham and a pretence. It is that which Christ mainly respects ; it is the same as we find it in our daily life. In any position of responsibility an employer requires fidelity above everything. If a young man is thoroughly to be trusted, if you can rely upon his word, upon his strict honesty, upon his careful attendance to duty, upon his punctuality, he is far more valued than one who may have twice the ability, if he lack this qualification.

It is even so in God's sight. Solomon reminds us that "a faithful man shall abound with blessings." Our Lord tells us that "he who is faithful in little, will be faithful also in much ;" and that the faithful and wise steward will be

greatly honoured when He shall appear. Moses is commended as being faithful in all his house ; and Daniel as “being faithful” in his discharge of duty, “because no offence or fault was found in Him ;” and Antipas is being spoken of as Christ’s “faithful martyr.”

It is a noble and a blessed thing, with few talents or with many, in a high position or in a humble one, to be faithful as before God, and to make this our constant aim. And if you would thus be faithful in fulfilling the various duties of the Christian life, first of all, it is needful that you should be faithful in your way of dealing with the glorious Gospel of the grace of God.

A comparison may assist us in gaining a clearer view of the Gospel, and our consequent duty with respect to it. A man of great wealth, having a very extensive business, meets with a young man in humble circumstances. This young man has no claim upon him, and has very considerable liabilities. But, from a motive of pure kindness, the rich man offers him a partnership and a share in his business, undertaking to clear off his former debts, and thus giving him an opportunity of rising to a very

good position in life. Does not this give us a true, though very imperfect, view of Christ's love to us in the Gospel ?

You have great liabilities. Your own conscience tells of sin, neglect, failure everywhere. Christ compares the debt to ten thousand talents (in our coin between one and two millions sterling), and you have nothing wherewith to pay. But Christ offers to meet all ; He has made Himself responsible for the whole sum, and when you trust in Him it is reckoned to Him and not to you. Moreover He offers you a partnership. You may be joint heirs with Him in His riches, His righteousness, His kingdom : all things are yours if ye are Christ's. He brings you into close fellowship with Himself ; He reckons you one of His own, over whom He will exercise the tenderest care.

But how do you deal with this offer of Christ ? You must deal with it in some way. If a partnership such as I have named were offered to you, you must distinctly refuse or accept it. If you accept it, the proper deeds must be drawn up and signed and witnessed, and then

there must be a public notice in the Gazette or other newspapers.

And so with Christ's offer. If you would have the benefit, there must be a distinct act of acceptance: you must put your hand to the deed. There must be no delay, no uncertainty, no false dealings with Christ: you must heartily, frankly, thankfully accept His salvation. By faith you must subscribe your name underneath the promise, and say in your heart, "Lord, I trust Thy word, and look to Thee to fulfil Thy covenant engagements with me." Nor must you be ashamed to confess it before all men; you must witness that you are Christ's in the world. In all this you must be faithful. These invitations and offers of Christ will benefit none that do not honestly and truly embrace them. But if you have truly accepted the benefit which Christ thus offers, it will involve fidelity in carrying out the duties and engagements implied in such a fellowship and union with Christ. The young man taken into partnership on such terms as I have named, would surely be pledged to a life-long struggle to repay the kindness received. The gratitude he felt would

prompt him to labour incessantly to advance the interests of the firm with which he was now connected: he would avoid all that would bring dishonour on the one who had acted so nobly towards him, and be unwearied in his efforts to serve him.

The Christian ought to show the same spirit. Carefully must you watch against the very least thing that will cast a slur on the name of Him whom you love, or the Gospel which you profess. Avoid the least contagion of evil, the very touch of anything that defileth. Turn away from all doubtful paths. Take a firm stand when deceit or fraud seem forced upon you by others whom it is your desire to please. Let there be genuine, straightforward honesty and truth in all business transactions; let there be guileless transparency in all your dealings; let there be no tampering with trade marks, nor calling things by wrong names, nor giving a false impression as to quality or quantity, nor infringing on the sacredness of God's day. Let thine eye be single, and thy whole body shall be full of light. Suffer all loss, even unto death, rather than the loss of a good conscience. By no means attempt to serve two

masters, for nothing more surely will destroy all your peace and lead to final ruin. Let an illustration fix this in our hearts.

When Napoleon, at the head of a vast army was trying to conquer Russia, it was found necessary to bring together the various parts of his army. One of these detachments had lost its way, and was in danger of being cut off by the Russian troops. Late one night a Jew presented himself before the General, and offered for a certain sum to lead them to the headquarters of Napoleon. "Will you swear to be true to us?" said the General. "I will," answered the Jew. Very well, if you lead us safely you shall have the money you ask; but if you betray us to the enemy, you shall be buried alive, and the whole army shall march across your grave. Early in the morning the soldiers started under the guidance of the Jew, and for a while all went well. Presently they reached a morass, where the horses could scarcely move the guns, and where the Jew tried to escape. "Lay hold of that man," the General shouted. "Send a detachment to look out from yonder hill," and away galloped some of the Cavalry.

Back they soon came, for the Russian army was close by.

Halting for a few minutes, the Jew was brought before the General, and in an agony of fear pleaded for his life. But it was in vain. Six men dug a hole in front of the tent, the Jew was cast into it, and his dying cries stifled by the clods of earth cast upon him, and the whole army marched across his grave.

Such was the end of a double-minded man, —a man who tried to serve two masters, and whose unfaithfulness met with the reward it deserved. And in the kingdom of Christ, there is the same terrible judgment awaiting such as try to play false with Him. You must be true to Him, and let nothing tempt you to seek other reward at the expense of losing His approval and His smile. Often place yourself in His presence, and ask Him if what you do is pleasing in His sight. Let not the thought of possessing some coveted treasure lead you to forget that His eye is upon you. Suppose you were to gain that which you long for, and you lose His favour, and at last are an outcast from His joy. What will it be to be trodden underfoot

of His angels, and like the Jewish spy, to be regarded with abhorrence by all the soldiers of our King? Which do you prefer, to share Christ's throne with His saints, or be the footstool beneath His feet?

To be faithful to Christ, it is also needful to use diligently for Him the talents committed to you. Whatever you have is but trust-money, for which the Lord will require an account. The gold and the silver, the years of our life, the influence we possess with others, our temporal comforts, our natural gifts, our spiritual advantages,—all these are to be laid out at interest in the Lord's service.

You must be faithful also in carrying the cross, and in meeting reproach for Christ's sake. You must consider how Christ patiently endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and in His strength you must do likewise. It is almost worse than death sometimes to be exposed day after day to taunt and unkind remarks, and to be looked coldly upon and regarded with dislike, because your life may not be like that of others, and because you may

try to follow the Saviour. But the cross will last but a little while, and then the gain will be eternal.

Faithful *unto death* ! Only so long will trial and temptation assail us. A few more days and years perchance we may have still to battle on ; a few more days of sorrow, mingled as He will have it, with seasons of quietness and joy ; a few more doubts and fears to withstand, and a few more efforts to make in Christ's service ; a few more words of testimony to bear for Him, and our warfare will be accomplished and the victory won. It has been well said, that "we should live one day at a time, and that day for God." We need not burden ourselves with a thousand troubles and difficulties that we may never meet with. Let me only consider for this day what the Master calls me to do ; let me only for this day watch and pray lest I fall into temptation ; let me only this day resist the uprisings of evil tempers and carnal lusts and passions ; let me only this day endeavour to ask what Jesus asks of me, and what He would do and think and speak if He were in my position,—and so live by the day, and leave the morrow in His hand ; and

every day will be a step nearer home, and leave a blessing behind ; and very soon the pilgrimage will be over, and the cross laid down, and a full rest reward the weary soul. Nor must I forget that He who calls me to be faithful unto death, enables me to be so by His own faithfulness to such as trust in Him. He was Himself faithful unto death for our sake. With all His sufferings full in view He hastened up to Jerusalem to suffer. He refused not the bitter cup : He drank it to the very dregs. He would not hearken to the cry to come down from the cross, for it would have been to leave us in our sins to perish. Peter promised to lay down his life for Christ, and yet failed at the very approach of danger ; but Christ did lay down His life for Peter and for His flock, to save them from wrath and judgment.

And if He was thus faithful unto death for me, shall not I strive to obey His call to be faithful unto Him ? Yes, and more than this : He who calls me to be faithful unto death, promises to be faithful to me now in my struggles and conflicts. It is He who liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore, and

giveth grace sufficient for me, and upholdeth me when ready to fall. He is ever by my side, in forbearing compassion when I have sinned, to cover me afresh with His spotless robe. He is near when the Tempter is at hand, and is able to succour those that are tempted. He is close at hand when trouble comes, and the heart fails, and no human power can avail to comfort me: therefore I may be faithful; I may be strong in His grace, though weak in myself. He, the ever-faithful One can make me faithful and keep me steadfast to the end. And more than this: He who bids me persevere, holds out to me the crown of life. "I will give thee the crown of life," is His word of promise.

"Faithful unto *death* a crown of *life*." Then death is not death, for when it comes I have life, yea, the truest and the highest life,—the life begun here, perfected in glory. And I have "a *crown* of life."

There are many crowns which men covet. There is the crown of pleasure and the crown of wealth, and the crown of high rank and distinction and the crown of dominion. But each of these is but a fading garland, and the head

which wears it soon lies down in the silent grave.

But a few years ago there was one who from a humble position had risen to the highest pinnacle of fame in Europe. Kings and Princes eagerly sought an alliance with him, and he had but to move a finger and a vast army was ready to do his bidding ; and nations were moved when he purposed war, and Europe seemed almost at his feet. But how soon it all passed by ! A few months, and his power all melted away, his army was scattered and in captivity, and he himself an exile ; and not three years after came the last summons,—and he who was once so great and high in the world, is now weaker than the weakest of his former subjects. “All flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass.”

But he who wears the crown of life liveth ever ; and that life, the life of immortality, the life of ceaseless joy, the life of heavenly love, the life of glory that fadeth not away. He is with

Christ, and with Christ for ever. He shall hear the joyful welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

A twofold image is used to set forth the glory that awaits God's people. And though in the following chapter a further reference is made to this subject, yet it may be well here to touch upon it. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." We have here, one comparison taken from the day and another from the night. They that are wise shall shine *as the brightness of the firmament*; or, as the promise given by our Lord, "as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." The clouds which now obscure the light will then all be scattered, the scene of the transfiguration will be repeated, when not Moses and Elias, but all the saints will shine in the light of Christ with a radiancy beyond that of noonday. And they will be a great power for good. The beneficence of earth's great luminary, shedding its fruitful beams o'er all the world, is a type of the blessing of God's

saints through the whole universe: and they shall shine "as the stars for ever and ever." Fixed in the vault of heaven, as they appear to us, calmly do those distant lamps, set in heaven's canopy, look down upon us in the midst of our strife and care and sorrow,—a fit emblem of the high position, the abiding continuance, and the everlasting rest of God's children in the world to come.

XIV.

Crossing the River, and Resurrection Glory.

BETWEEN the life of faithful service on earth, and the glory of Immanuel's land, there flows a river which must needs be crossed. And we have good reason to ponder what are "the steps across," and what lies in the fair country beyond. One precious promise, illustrated by an historical incident in the history of the children of Israel, seems best suited to answer to the former of these inquiries. The promise is that given in Isaiah xliii. 2: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

The narrative which illustrates this promise is that of the crossing of the Jordan, as narrated

in Joshua iii. iv. The presence of Christ with us, as the Captain of our salvation, must be our one ground of hope, and the resting-place of our souls when the time has come that we must part from all below. He has said it, and will make it good, that in this river, however dark it may appear, He will be by our side. When Israel passed over into Canaan, the ark went before, and those who carried it stood still in the midst of the stream till all the host had reached the other side. And thus we learn that He, of whose presence the ark was a symbol, will be with us every moment of our last struggle; and while He is by, the waves shall know His power who stilled the rough billows of Gennesaret, and said to them, "Peace: be still!"

Perhaps these pages may be read by some trembling, fearful Christian, who looks forward with great shrinking and dread to the day when the summons shall come. But you will probably find Christ beforehand with you, and strengthening your faith; so that a bright and blessed hope of His kingdom will sustain you. It seems to me, the great matter is every day to be living in His presence, resting on His promise,

and setting Him before us; and then He who has been so near to us in life, will be doubly near to us in death, and—

When the waves roll full in view,
He will fix their "hitherto."

But we must look beyond the river. Our hope must go forth to survey the land of promise. We must cheer our souls by the firm and steadfast promises of eternal life. We must grasp the blessed assurance that Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. And here we must distinguish between the joy that awaits believers at death, and the fuller joy that awaits them at His coming.

Not very much is said of the immediate bliss of believers after death. A few bright rays of light pierce through the obscurity of the present condition of those who sleep in Jesus, and, thank God, it is enough to assure us of their blessedness. We have Christ's word to the dying thief: "To day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise;" we have the prayer of Stephen: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and the declaration that

Christ was standing at the right hand of God to succour His faithful servant. We have the word of St. Paul, that for him to be "absent from the body" was to be "present with the Lord;" and that "to die was gain," and "to depart and be with Christ was far better." We have, moreover, the parable which tells us that Lazarus, in death, "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;" and the statement in the Apocalypse: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

And this is about all. We see, at least, that the bliss is immediate. It is no mere sleep of insensibility. It is rest from toil; it is companionship with the saints. It is greater nearness to Christ than we can enjoy on earth. It may be summed up in a few words from our Burial Service, "With whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity."

There seems a special object in the com-

paratively slight reference in Holy Scripture to the happiness of the blessed dead whilst in the separate state. It seems intended to remind us that this state is but temporary. It is to fix our eye on the glory to be revealed at the coming of the Lord. It is to lead Christians to look onward to that blessed hope of His glorious appearing. And the fulness of statement with respect to this, contrasts very strongly with the brief and few statements with reference to the condition of believers before this period.

In our Lord's discourses, whilst He passes over almost in silence the period immediately following death, He gives exhortation and promise and parable in almost every one of His discourses, with reference to the day of His appearing. In all the apostolic epistles, the Holy Spirit speaks much of the events which will then transpire, but scarcely anything with respect to death.

There is one chapter unspeakably inspiring to the Christian in the loss of friends, or in the prospect of his own dissolution. I refer to 1 Cor. xv., which is so connected in the minds of most of us with the most solemn seasons in life,

when we have carried to the grave those nearest and dearest to us.

There is something so cheering in the evident authority with which the Apostle writes. He was not expressing his own opinion; he was not giving the result of a long course of acute reasoning; he was not endeavouring to prove by any arguments that the soul was immortal, or that man would live again. But he speaks as the oracles of God: he brings a message from the faithful covenant-keeping God for the consolation of His people. As only one could do who had been taught from above, he lifts the veil from that which is to come, and tells in no faltering or uncertain accents of that which shall happen when the Lord returns. He tells how the spoiler shall be spoiled, and the King of terrors vanquished; he tells how death and the grave shall lose their prey, and closes a magnificent and glowing description of the resurrection of the saints, by an appeal to Christians, on the strength of this sure and glorious hope, to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as their labour should not be in vain

in the Lord." A few elements of resurrection joy are very prominent in the mind of the Apostle.

(1) There will be *identity*. The resurrection body is compared to the ear of grain, springing from the seed cast into the ground; and we are told, that "to every seed" shall be given "his own body." The very word "resurrection" supposes this: were it otherwise, it would be "creation," not resurrection. Whatever change there may be, however marvellous the transformation from these bodies which shall soon mingle with their parent dust, yet in everything which constitutes our separate personality, we shall be the same men and women that are now known by the names we bear. There is great joy in this thought. The faces we miss from our homes we shall see again; the dear friends who have together bent the knee with us in prayer, and have followed the same Saviour, we shall by and by recognise amongst the throng of glorified ones.

After the frightful persecution of the Protestants in France, those who survived and were released from the galleys were brought down to

Geneva, and there met by friends and relatives. Great and sorrowful was the change wrought in many by five or ten or more years of suffering, and yet, when recognised by those from whom they had been parted years before, it would not be easy to describe the joy that ensued. But who can describe what will be the joy of meeting our friends hereafter; when the change will be so blessed, and when we recognise those whom we have loved in this lower world! For let us remember that a second element of resurrection joy will be *complete freedom from all distressing infirmity*. This mortal frame is too often a cause of weariness and suffering: "in this tabernacle we groan, being burdened;" and part of this burden is our liability to numberless complaints and diseases which we cannot escape from. We are overcome by toil, depressed by care, borne down by many evils and miseries which come upon us from time to time. Constitutional ailments, nervousness, accidents, beside a thousand other things, make men often prefer death to life, and long for the hour when all this will be over. But in the day when Christ calls forth His faithful ones from

the grave, all this will be passed: "This corruptible shall put on incorruption." No pain, no sickness, no sorrow, no fear, shall depress the spirit. The children of the resurrection will be as the angels in heaven. The entire absence of all that now makes the body too often a clog and a hindrance to the spirit, will be another element of our joy on that day.

And then a third. *The mighty power* of the resurrection body: "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." So weak is the body when laid in the tomb, that the greatest Monarch is then weaker than the weakest of his subjects, and the greatest warrior unable to resist the worm that feeds upon him. But in the risen body there will be power. We may expect that every faculty we now possess will be indefinitely increased; every physical and mental power will be vastly augmented; every talent we now desire to employ will be multiplied many-fold. We often lament now, how little we can say or do in the Master's service, but let us believe that with powers so greatly enlarged there will be blessed fields for service which now we cannot the least imagine.

Then let us consider *the glory and beauty* of the resurrection body. Sometimes we see now a heavenly beauty in the Christian's countenance. We have seen one whose every look and expression tells of faith and love and unselfish benevolence. We have seen a holy glow of deep and chastened piety in one who for years has been bearing some heavy cross. We have seen, too, the beauteous innocence displayed in the face of a little child, and have thought it the most lovely sight which earth affords.

But in the risen saints, there will shine forth a beauty of holiness and love and joy and rapture beyond all this: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." And the beauty of Him who is fairer than the children of men will be reflected upon His own: "When I awake in His likeness, I shall be satisfied with it."

Then there is the thought of IMMORTALITY: "This mortal shall put on IMMORTALITY." But how can we conceive of this immortality? What one thing is there ever we have seen, but is dying, fading, passing away? How can we think aright of this ever-abiding continuance, never-ceasing life of the glorified? Shall we

venture on a thought which may show us, at least, our inability to grasp this tremendous idea of a life which can never have an end? Can we conceive a life as long as the aggregate of all the lives of the men and women that have trodden our globe? Begin with the old patriarchs before the flood; add life to life, each nearly reaching the term of a thousand years; add to these the lives of all who have ever lived since. Consider but the aggregate years of the people of a single generation; and then, if we could thus add together the years of men in all generations of the world's history, and consider this vast period in reference to eternity, the great clock of eternal existence would scarce have struck its first note!

And this everlasting existence will be assuredly one of ever-increasing joy to those who rise in the image of the Lord! And this immortality will be spent in companionship with the glorified Redeemer and His glorified and perfected Church. Here is the crowning bliss. To see Christ's glory, to taste the joy of His presence, to be near Him and with Him, and with all who have loved Him for ever; then

the cup will be full, and we shall have pleasures for evermore at His right hand.

“The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” When this glory has been attained, we shall need no more “steps across.” Fears, conflicts, difficulties, temptations, sorrows, beset us now, and are our portion whilst we linger here. Sometimes we tread the valley of humiliation; sometimes we have to climb the hill where every footstep is painful to the flesh; sometimes we have to gird on our armour to meet Apollyon who comes out to withstand us; sometimes we are terrified by the lions which are in the way; sometimes a Red Sea of trouble lies before us, and the recollections of sins in the past are like foes in the rear, so that we want now every help we can obtain to enable us to overcome. But this is only for a short season. “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

Meanwhile, dear reader, may you have peace

in Christ, though tribulation in the world may be your portion. Whatever counsel you may find in this little book that you may need, and that is in accordance with the written Word, endeavour to carry out in daily practice. Make the Book of God your constant companion. Cling with childlike faith to the hand of your faithful Guide: keep very near to Him, and walk only in such paths as He would approve. Cherish the presence of His good Spirit in your heart, and work diligently in His vineyard, and hope evermore. The enemy will not be able to triumph over you; the walls of Jericho shall be levelled before you, and you shall go in to possess your inheritance, even "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

I have a home above,
From sin and sorrow free,
A mansion which Eternal Love
Designed and formed for me.

My Father's gracious hand
Has built this sweet abode,
From everlasting it was planned
My dwelling place with God.

My Saviour's precious blood
Has made my title sure ;
He passed through death's dark raging flood
To make my rest secure.

The Comforter is come,
The earnest has been given :
He leads me onward to the Home
Reserved for me in Heaven.

Bright angels guard my way,
His ministers of power,
Encamping round me night and day,
Preserve in danger's hour.

Loved ones are gone before,
Whose pilgrim days are done ;
I soon shall greet them on that shore
Where partings are unknown.

Works by the Same Author.

Fcap 8vo. Cloth extra, 3s. Bevelled, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

HOME SUNDAYS;

OR,

Help and Consolation from the Sanctuary.

CONTENTS.

God's Love manifested in the Law	Joy in Christ's Ascension
The True Light	Our Exalted King
The Well of Bethlehem	Our Melchisedek Priest
The First Miracle	The Promise of the Comforter
The First Miracle (continued)	The Way of Access
Nicodemus	Individual Faith
I have Sinned	Not one Forgotten
The Best Cheer	One in Christ
The Nobleman of Capernaum	Sanctification through the Truth
Bread from Heaven	Loving Service
Submission in Trial	Heavenly Guidance
The Piercing of Jesus' Side	The True Worshipers
Christ hath Risen	Preparedness for the Lord's Coming

The intent of this book is to supply practical Expositions of great and necessary truths of the Christian faith, which, for the most part, are brought before us in the Services of our Church.

The book being thus arranged for the Christian Year, it is peculiarly appropriate for those who are prevented from attending the public Services of the Church.

18mo. Cloth limp, 1s.; extra binding, 1s. 6d. Sixth Edition.

"NOT YOUR OWN;"

or, Counsels to Young Christians.

CONTENTS.—Thine Alone.—Backwards or Forwards: Which? Living by Faith.—The Young Christian and his Bible.—The Young Christian on Sunday.—The Young Christian and the Lord's Supper.—The Young Christian on his Watch-Tower.—Watch and Pray.—Parting Words.

R

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Uniform with "Not Your Own." Extra cloth, 1s. 6d.

ZIONWARD.

Help on the Way to the Better Land.

CONTENTS.—Zionward—The Heavenly Ladder—Firm as a Rock—The Blood more Precious than Gold—The Upward Glance—The Door Open and the Door Shut—Working for Christ—Strength for the Strengthless—Deepen the Well—Nearer to Thee—Everlasting Arms.

Limp cloth. Uniform with "Not Your Own." 1s. Extra cloth, gilt edges. 1s. 6d. Second Edition.

SAFE AND HAPPY.

Words of Help and Encouragement to Young Women.

WITH PRAYERS FOR DAILY USE.

CONTENTS.—Safe and Happy.—Under the Wing.—Life's Work: Preparation.—Heart Work.—Home Work.—Receiving a Kindness.—A Necklace of Pearls.—Putting first things first.—The Master becomes a Servant.—Dangerous Ground.—The Best Friend.—Stand up for Jesus.—The Privilege of Prayer.—The Oak of Weeping.—Good Bye.

126 pp., fancy cloth, 6d. Extra binding, 8d.

WELCOME HOME!

or, Plain Teaching from the Story of the Prodigal.

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

F'cap 8vo., cloth, red edges, 3s.; antique, gilt edges, 3s. 6d. Seventh
Large Type Edition.

Cheap Edition. Uniform with "Not Your Own." 1s. 6d.

DAY BY DAY;

or,

Counsels to Christians on the Details of Every-day Life.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE

REV. T. VORES, M.A.,

Vicar of St. Mary's, Hastings.

CONTENTS.—How to Begin Well.—The Right Principle.—
Daily Renewal.—Daily Mercies.—Daily Light.—Daily Prayer.
—Daily Raiment.—Daily Work.—Daily Walking.—Daily Talk.
—Daily Warfare.—Daily Consolation.—A Blessing in the
Family.—Victory over the World.—The Great Account.

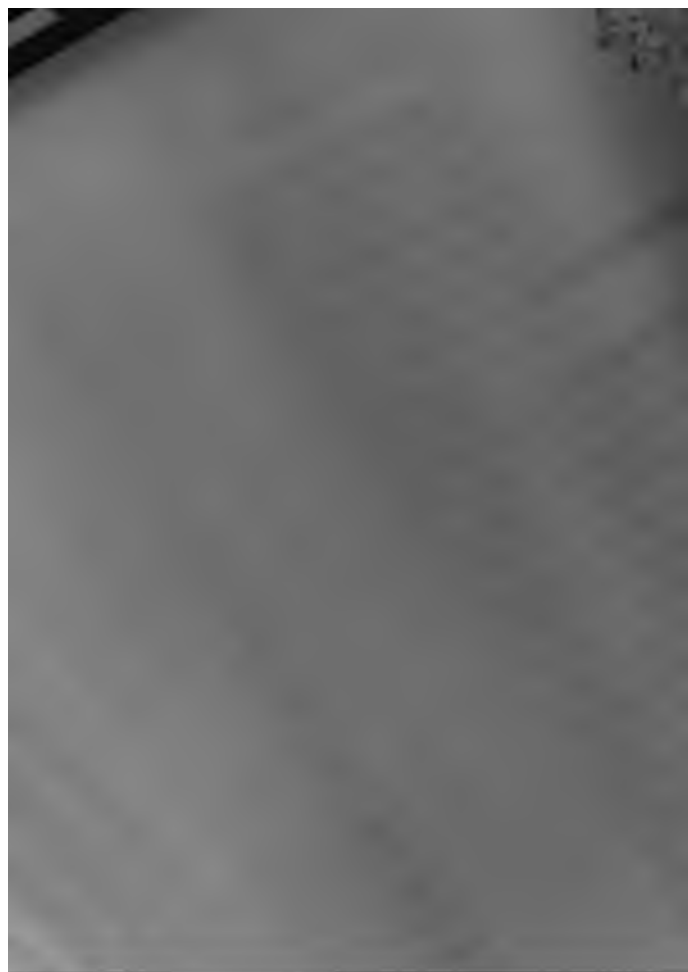
THE HOME OF BETHANY.

OR,

*Christ Revealed as the Teacher and Comforter of His
People.*

BEFORE HIS FOOTSTOOL.

*Family Prayers for One Month, with Prayers for
Special Occasions.*



WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Series of small books in fancy covers.

Turn to the Stronghold! A New Year's Address. 1d.

Deepen the Well! A few Words to Christians on the Spiritual Life. 32mo. Fancy cover. 1s. per dozen.

Nearer to Thee, or Communion with God. 32 pp. 1d.

Firm as a Rock. 1d.

Working for Christ. 32 pp. 1d.

The Upward Glance. A few words of Counsel and Encouragement. 32 pp. 1d.

Strength for the Strengthless. 2d.

Everlasting Arms. An Address to Professing Christians. 2d.

The Heavenly Ladder, and How to Climb it. 1s. per dozen.

Ritual in the Light of God's Word. 24 pp. Fcap 8vo. 2d.

The Plant of Brazil, and the Lessons it Teaches. 1s. per dozen

The Door Open and the Door Shut. 1s. per dozen.

Safe to Land! 1s. per dozen.

Births, Marriages, and Deaths. Second Edition. 1d.

Confirmation. What Does it Profit? 1s. per dozen.

After Confirmation. How shall I Live? 1s. per dozen.

A Few Questions to be thought over alone with God, previous to Confirmation. A Handbill. 3d. per dozen, or 1s. 6d. per 100.

Counsels to Communicants. 3d. per dozen, or 1s. 6d. per 100.

A Few Words to Parents who have brought their Child to be Baptized. 4d. per dozen, or 2s. per 100.

Words of Peace and Consolation to those who have lost one dear to them. 4d. per dozen, or 2s. per 100.

.....
LONDON: WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,
23, Holles Street, Cavendish Square; and Aldine Chambers,
Fleet Street.

SELECTION FROM THE
NEW PUBLICATIONS

OF

WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

Holles Street, Cavendish Square; and Aldine Chambers, Paternoster Row.

BY THE REV. J. C. RYLE, M.A.,

Honorary Canon of Norwich;

Vicar of Stradbroke, and Rural Dean of Hoxne, Suffolk.

Expository Thoughts on the Gospels.

Designed for Family and Private Reading, with the Text complete, and copious Notes.

ST. MATTHEW. Extra cloth. 6s.

ST. MARK. Uniform with the above. 5s.

ST. LUKE. Vol. I. 5s. 6d.

ST. LUKE. Vol. II. 7s.

ST. JOHN. Vol. I. 6s. 6d.

ST. JOHN. Vol. II. 6s. 6d.

ST. JOHN. Vol. III. 8s.

This work is also kept in half Morocco, at an excess of 3s. per volume. In extra half Morocco binding, at 5s. 6d.; or whole Turkey Morocco, 6s. 6d. per volume. Also in extra bindings, for presentation.

Home Truths.

Being the Miscellaneous Addresses and Tracts, revised and corrected especially for this work. Sixth edition. F^{cap} 8vo., extra cloth, lettered. Eight Series. Each illustrated with a Frontispiece and Vignette Title. Each volume, 3s. 6d.

This work is also kept in Morocco, Russia, and other elegant bindings, for presents; prices and specimens of which will be forwarded on application to the Publishers.

Hymns for the Church on Earth.

Being Three Hundred Hymns, for the most part of Modern date. Selected and arranged by the Rev. J. C. Ryle, M.A. Ninth Edition.

In small 8vo., black cloth, red edges, 4s.; limp cloth, for invalids, 4s.; black antique, 4s. 6d.; violet and extra cloth antique, gilt edges, 5s.; Turkey Morocco, 10s. 6d. Also in Russia and other bindings, for presentation.

A Portable Edition of "Hymns for the Church on Earth." Printed on toned paper. Extra cloth, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.; red edges, 3s.

Bishops and Clergy of Other Days.

With an Introduction on the Real Merits of the Reformers and Puritans. Crown 8vo., extra cloth, 4s.

The Two Bears,

And other Sermons for Children. With Illustrations by Dalziel. Extra cloth. 1s. 6d.

Story of Madame Thérèse, the Cantinière ;

or, the French Army in '92. Translated from the work of M. M. Erckmann-Chatrain, by two Sisters. With an Introduction and Edited by the Rev. J. C. Ryle, M.A. With nineteen full-page Engravings. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Spiritual Songs.

Coloss. iii. 6. Being One Hundred Hymns, not to be found in the hymn books most commonly used. Selected by the Rev. J. C. Ryle. Fifteenth enlarged edition. Series I., glazed wrapper, 9d.; fancy cloth, gilt edges, 1s. Series II., uniform with the first series: in glazed wrapper, gilt edges, 1s.; limp cloth, 1s. 4d.

A detailed List of all Tracts by the Rev. J. C. Ryle may be obtained on application to the Publishers.

Chief Women ;

or, Higher Life in High Places. By Mrs. Gordon, Author of "The Home Life of Sir David Brewster," "Work: Plenty to do, and How to do it," etc. 3s. 6d.

Thoughts on the Christian Life ;

or, Leaves from Letters. By the late Hetty Bowman, author of "Christian Daily Life," etc. With Introduction by Mrs. Gordon, author of "The Home Life of Sir David Brewster," etc. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"Dies Iræ !"

The Judgment of the Great Day, Viewed in the Light of Scripture and Conscience. By R. B. Girdlestone, M.A.; author of "The Anatomy of Scepticism." Crown 8vo. 6s.

At Home with Jesus.

Loving Memorials of the Rev. John Christian Reichardt, Missionary to the Jews. By the Author of "Safe for Ever."

Biographical Sketches of Ancient Irish Saints and other Missionaries. By the Rev. Herbert M'Laughlin, M.A. Crown 8vo.

Within the Veil ;

or, Suggestions for daily Prayer. By the Rev. Charles G. Baskerville, B.A., late Chaplain of the Bath Penitentiary. Limp cloth, 8d.

The Nature and Evidences of Regeneration.

By the Rev. George Townshend Fox, M.A., Vicar of St. Nicholas, Durham. With an Introduction by the Rev. Octavius Winslow, D.D. Square 18mo. Limp cloth, red edges, 1s. 9d. Extra cloth, gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

The Man with the Book ;

or, the Results of Bible Agency. By J. Weylland, Author of The "Standard of the Cross in the Champ-de-Mars." With Introduction by the Earl of Shaftesbury. Seventh Edition. Crown 8vo. Illustrated. 3s. 6d.

WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

Station Amusements in New Zealand.

By Lady Barker. Author of "Station Life in New Zealand."
With Map and Engravings. Second edition. Post 8vo. 6s.

Life in the Ghetto ;

or, the Jewish Physician. By the Author of "Broad Shadows
in Life's Pathway," and uniform in size. 5s.

Carrying Things to Extremes.

By the Author of "Copsley Annals." Square 16mo., cloth, gilt
edges. 1s.

Voices from Silent Teachers ;

or, Wayside Wisdom for Wayfarers. By the Author of "Hymns
for the Household of Faith." With Introduction by Mrs. Sewell.
3s. 6d.

Sunshine and Shadow.

Poems by Jennette Threlfall. With Introduction by the Lord
Bishop of Lincoln. Small post 8vo. 5s.

The Child's Acts of the Apostles.

A Narrative and Commentary, written in simple language for the
little ones. With Notes for the use of Teachers. With Introduc-
tion by the Right Rev. Bishop Anderson. 18mo., cloth. 3s.

Pleasant Sundays with my Children ;

or, "Here a Little and There a Little." Familiar Conversations
on the Animals, Birds, Insects, Reptiles, Fishes, Flowers, Trees,
and Precious Stones, of the Bible. By the Author of "Ethel
Woodville," etc. With many Illustrations. New Edition. In
F^{cap} 8vo., extra cloth, gilt edges. 5s.

Bertie Miller.

A Tale for Children. By Leslie Gore. 2s.

Always in a Muddle.

A Simple Story. By M. F., Author of "The Confirmation Class,"
"Ben Wentworth's Revenge," etc. Limp cloth. 1s.

HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

Handbook of Special Mission Services :

containing Suggestions, Services as sanctioned by the Bishops of London and Rochester, Hymns, and Specimen Addresses. By the Rev. C. F. S. Money, M.A., Incumbent of St. John's, Deptford. Fcap 8vo. Cloth 1s.

Short Sermons for Sick Rooms.

In very large type. By the Rev. Josiah Bateman, M.A., Vicar of Margate, Hon. Canon of Canterbury, and Rural Dean; Author of "The Life of Henry Venn Elliott, of Brighton," etc. Crown 8vo., limp cloth, extra, 2s.; extra cloth, gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

Sun-Glints in the Wilderness.

Our Lord's Temptation, and other subjects. By the Rev. Hugh Macmillan, LL.D., Author of "Bible Teachings in Nature." Crown 8vo. 4s. 6d.

Clear Shining.

A Memoir of Gertrude Mary Acklom. By her Mother. With Introduction by the Author of "Memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars." Second edition, with Portrait. Extra cloth, 1s. 6d.; limp, 1s.

Reminiscences of a Clergyman during a Ministry of

Forty Years in a Country Parish. By the Rev. Robert Grant, B.C.L., Prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral, Fellow of Winchester College, and Vicar of Bradford Abbes. 2s.

The Home of Poverty made Rich.

A volume of Interest specially adapted for Motehrs' Meetings. By Mrs. Best, author of "Tracts on the Parables," etc. Second Edition. Fcap 8vo., with Frontispiece. 2s. 6d. Limp cloth, 1s. 6d.

Seed Scattered Broadcast ;

or, Incidents in a Camp Hospital. By S. Mc. Beth. With an Introduction, and Edited by the Author of "The Memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars." Uniform with "English Hearts and English Hands." Second edition. Post 8vo. 3s. 6d. Cheaper edition. Limp cloth. 2s.

Irish Priests and English Landlords.

By the late Rev. George Brittain, M.A., Rector of Kilcommack. Co. Longford. A new edition, revised and corrected by the Rev. Henry Seddall, B.A., Rector of Dunany, Co. Louth; author of "Historical Sketches of Romanism," "Malta, Past and Present," etc. With Engravings. 3s. 6d.

Lay Preaching.

A Divinely-appointed part of Christian Ministry. By John Purcell Fitzgerald, M.A. Crown 8vo. Extra cloth, 3s.

The Track of the Light ;

or, Christ's Footsteps Followed. By the Rev. J. George Bullock, M.A., Rector of St. Runwald's, Colchester. Extra cloth, 2s.

Perfectionism.

Being a Review of "Gladness in Jesus," by the Rev. W. E. Boardman, and "Holiness through Faith," by R. Pearsall Smith. By the Rev. George Townsend Fox, M.A., Vicar of St. Nicholas, Durham. Fcap. 8vo. Limp cloth, 1s. 6d. ; paper cover, 1s.

Letters

by the late W. Amherst Hayne, B.A., Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge. With Introduction by the Rev. G. T. Fox, M.A., Vicar of St. Nicholas, Durham. Second Edition. Square 18mo. Cloth, red edges, 1s. 6d.

Thoughts on the Life Hereafter ;

or, the Many Mansions in my Father's House. Extra cloth boards. 1s. 6d.

Hearts made Glad and Homes made Happy.

Sketches of Subjects for Mothers' Meetings and Fathers' Classes. Post 8vo. Extra cloth. 3s. 6d.

Our Father.

A Word of Encouraging Remembrance for the Children of God. By the author of "Thoughts on Conversion." With an Introduction by the Rev. A. Hewlett, D.D., Vicar of Astley, near Manchester. Second edition. Cloth extra, bevelled boards. 3s.

HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

Elisha the Prophet a Type of Christ.

By the Rev. Dr. Edersheim. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Morning and Evening Hymns for a Week.

By the late Miss Charlotte Elliott, Author of "Just as I am."
Fortieth thousand. Limp cloth, gilt edges, 1s.

Stories from Memel.

Dedicated to the Young. By Mrs. Agnes de Havilland (née Molesworth.) With six Illustrations, from designs by Walter Crane. Square 18mo., extra cloth. 1s. 6d.

Living Jewels.

Diversity of Christian Character, suggested by Precious Stones, with Biographical Examples. By A. L. O. E. With Illustrations. Small post 8vo. 2s. 6d.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A.,

Vicar of St. Augustine's, Highbury New Park, London.

Words Spoken to My Friends.

Sermons preached at St. Augustine's, Highbury New Park, London. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Pulpit Recollections.

Being Sermons preached during a Six Years' Ministry at Cheltenham and Highbury New Park. Revised and adapted for general reading. One Vol., post 8vo. 5s. 6d.

Lectures on Home Subjects.

Addressed especially to the Working Classes. Fcap 8vo. 2s. 6d.

"Salted with Fire."

A View of the Doctrine of the Eternity of Punishment. Tinted wrapper. 4d.

The Secret of Rome's Strength.

A Sermon preached at the Parish Church, Islington. In tinted wrapper. 3d.

WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

BY BROWNLOW NORTH, B.A.

Magdalen Hall, Oxford;

Registrar of the Diocese of Winchester and Surrey.

Think on these Things ;

Wisdom : her cry.—Wisdom : who has it!—The Grace of God—Christ the Saviour : Christ the Judge. Uniform with "Ourselves." 3s.

The Prodigal Son ;

or, the Way Home. Cloth boards, extra, antique binding. 2s.

CONTENTS.—1 About Prodigals.—2 About Idolaters.—3 About the Sheep and the Swine.—4 About Demoniacs.—5 The Recovery.—6 Repentance and Conversion.—7 The Way Home.—8 The Reception.

Ourselves :

A Picture sketched from the History of the Children of Israel. Fourth Edition. Cloth boards, 2s. 6d.; antique binding, 3s. Fifth and Cheaper Edition. 18mo., cloth limp. 1s. 9d.

Yes ! or No !

or, God's Offer of Salvation. Gen. xxiv. 58. Uniform with "Ourselves." Third Edition. Extra binding. 3s. 18mo., cloth limp, cheap edition. 1s. 9d.

You ! what You are, and what You may be.

Sketched from the history of the Gadarene. Uniform with "Ourselves." Square. 1s.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

A Practical Exposition. Uniform with "Ourselves." Second Edition. Square 18mo., cloth boards, 1s. 6d.; extra binding. 2s.

HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.



